From Dirty Oil to Community Mentor: Corporate Responses to Stakeholder Pressure in the Alberta Oil Sands

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Abstract

This study presents the findings of an in-depth qualitative study of corporate responses to stakeholder pressures in the context of Canada's oil sands. The study applies institutional theory and particularly, theory of organisational fields, strategic responses, institutional pressures and institutional work to examine interactions between stakeholders and oil companies. I argue that existing organisational theory often neglects to consider the tactics and mechanisms through which key stakeholder groups attempt to change, maintain or disrupt prevailing institutions. Furthermore, I argue that existing work in this area has failed to fully consider the potential significance of communities as powerful stakeholders.

The study finds that the logics of protest used by social movement stakeholders to exert pressures differ from the logics and associated tactics currently suggested in the existing literature. More specifically, the findings indicate that the core logic used to pressure oil companies and the collective industry, are based on 'bearing witness'.

Another contribution that this study makes is to understand corporate responses to stakeholder pressures (specifically the public, non-government organisations, communities and through establishing an inter-organisational collaboration) at an individual and field level. This reveals that corporations and their field level organisations respond relationally (attempting to build new relationships with stakeholder groups, or their own competitors) use existing social networks, mimic these relations through mass marketing communication channels and embed themselves more within local communities. The responses used also aim to shape the external environment to make it more supportive in the future.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis presents the findings of a qualitative case study that examines how oil companies operating in the Alberta Oil Sands respond to various constellations of stakeholders in their external environment. Specifically, the stakeholders considered here are community members, environmentalists and the general public. In particular, the thesis focuses on interrelationships between various stakeholder groups, the challenges they raise, the means through which they exert pressure and the corresponding strategies used by companies[1] - at the individual and collective (field) level - to respond to stakeholders. This chapter will consider the theoretical rationale for the thesis and will contextualise the study by introducing relevant literature and showing where the theoretical contribution lies. More specifically, this chapter outlines the research questions and objectives that are pursued in the study and their consequent relevance to the topic. It will then provide an overview of the thesis and summarise the structure and content of the subsequent chapters

1.1: Research focus and aims

Institutional theory has become a core paradigm for explaining and interpreting the behaviour and strategy of organisations (Suddaby, 2010; Vogel, 2012). It is useful for understanding inter-organisational or societal transformations (Lawrence, Suddaby and Leca, 2009). That said, there has been a recent shift away from macro-level concepts such as institutionalization or institutional change, towards engaging with micro-level concepts and actors' daily work (Dacin et al., 2010; Lawrence and Suddaby, 2009; Lok and de Rond, 2013). Institutional work considers the more unstructured, daily activities of individual and field level actors to understand how they construct, maintain or disrupt institutions (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2009). This has led to a focus on identity work (Lefsrud and Meyer, 2012) and emotion (Vince and Voss, 2010). I define institutions as a concept that attempts to describe the social processes used as "templates for action, cognition or emotion" (Suddaby et al. 2010; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983).

With the emergence of institutional work as a new lens, (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2009) new avenues for studying the role of stakeholders and social movement actors have opened up,

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[1] In this thesis the terms companies, firms, businesses and corporations refer to private sector, profit-orientated organisations and are used interchangeably throughout.

to try to bring about change or attempt to maintain institutional arrangements to ensure the dominance of an elite group (Dacin et al. 2010; Micelotta and Washington, 2013). The ways in which stakeholders pressure companies, especially when one or more of these are activist groups, has been considered to relate to their goals and means (den Hond and de Bakker, 2007). However we know little about how stakeholders challenge a resource rather than a particular company. Furthermore, institutional theory has largely ignored the role of local communities on organisational fields (cf. Marquis, 2010). Recently, this has been redressed with a focus on communities as stakeholders (Tracey et al., 2010) or as sites of institutional arrangements and logics (Thornton et al., 2012). This is because it was assumed that the globalisation of recent years had led to virtual organisational fields (Scott, 2001). Organisational literature is also lacking an understanding of how stakeholders can contest resources, fields or individual companies when they are marginal. In this study, I attempt to redress this knowledge gap by examining the types of strategies and, more importantly, the underlying logics of protest (della Porta and Diani, 1999) that are used by stakeholders to challenge corporations. I argue that understanding the mechanisms and tactics used by stakeholders to create issue awareness and exert influence is critical to increasing knowledge on corporate responses to the various and often conflicting pressures that they face. Therefore, the aim of this research is to generate theory that will offer more nuanced, and deeper insights into the ways in which an organization responds to a complex, heterogeneous external environment.

It has already been established that organisations are frequently subjected to an array of complex, often competing and challenging demands (Ansari et al., 2011, Friedland and Alford, 1991; Kraatz and Block, 2008; Pache and Santos, 2010). It may seem surprising; therefore, that there has currently been no empirical study to consider the ways in which corporations at the individual and collective field level respond to such pressures (Greenwood et al., 2011). This may be because the modern corporation, let alone the organisational field, will use a wide array of responses to placate multiple stakeholders. Furthermore, we know still far less about the ways in which corporations are able to influence or shape the society within which they are embedded (Barley, 2007; 2008). Oliver's (1991) seminal theoretical paper provides a typology of response strategies that are used by companies facing institutional pressures. While Oliver's typology has made a significant contribution to our understanding of corporate responses to institutional pressures, it is overly simplistic and does not capture the ways in which a company or industry may respond distinctively to various constituent groups exerting different, often multiple and conflicting institutional pressures.

A central interest of organizational theory has long been in how organizations are influenced and shaped by their external environment (Barley, 2010; Parsons, 1956). Barley asserts that the way in which the organizational environment influences organizations has remained the main concern for organizational theorists. Only a small number of papers in four journals since 1980 (*Organization Studies, Administrative Science Quarterly,* the *American Journal of Sociology* and the *Academy of Management Journal*) have been concerned with boundary spanning activities aimed at influencing their external environment, such as public affairs, public relations, government relations or advertising (Barley, 2010). Firms respond to multiple stakeholder groups within their organizational field (Pache and Santos, 2010). Here my focus is on how they respond to the public, environmentalists and community members, both those engaged in public protest and others wishing to derive benefits from the presence of the industry.

Because studies have tended to focus on conceptualising possible responses or summarising other literatures to compile a typology (Kraatz and Block, 2008; Suddaby and Lawrence, 2006) the role of the boundary spanning employees, such as the issue manager, or community relations manager, has been neglected. We also know little about how the stakeholder pressure might relate to subsequent corporate responses to institutional complexity and pressure, because a study combining these has not been undertaken. That said, there is rising interest in the role of elite groups to maintain legitimacy, such as when industry faces field-level attempts to contest its legitimacy by stakeholders within the external environment of the firm (Zietsma and Lawrence, 2010; Lawrence, Suddaby and Leca, 2009).

1.2 Research questions

As discussed above, the thesis uses institutional theory to better understand the ways in which corporations at the individual and collective field level respond to stakeholder pressures. This is the major focus of the study. To fully understand these corporate responses at the individual and field level, it is important to recognise the ways in which boundary-spanning employees comprehend stakeholder pressures, but also the ways in which adversarial stakeholders challenge corporations by contesting their practices. Consequently, the first research question is:

How do adversarial stakeholders challenge corporations?

This question is addressed in chapter five. The stakeholders use the protest logic of bearing witness to indirectly challenge corporations by focusing on their own roles and expertise to raise concerns about the industrial practice at large. This is an important research question in its own right, but it is also crucial for fully understanding the complex institutional environment (institutional complexity) that a corporation and their organisational field faces. This informs our understanding of the ways in which corporations respond to stakeholder pressures. The second key research question guiding this research is:

In what ways do corporations respond to stakeholder pressures?

This question is addressed in chapter six. Corporations initiate individual and collective, field-level responses that compartmentalise different stakeholder groups and aim to establish relations that influence stakeholders to foster more favourable conditions on the corporations and their organisational field. Although both research questions could be discrete, question two builds off question one in this thesis to better aid our understanding of corporate responses.

1.3: Summary of the thesis

This study seeks to unravel these institutional complexities through an in-depth case study of the Alberta Oil Sands, Canada. More specifically, the research investigates the relatively new processes associated with 'oil-sands'[2] extraction in the province of Alberta, and the range of issues that these activities have given rise to. In recent years empirical applications of institutional theory have been dominated by quantitative research methods, which often apply reductionist proxies to model organisational forms and environments (Suddaby, 2010). Case studies are therefore needed to better develop theories explaining how actors operating in companies' external environments seek to influence their practices or challenge their legitimacy, and the ways in which companies respond (King and Soule 2007). The importance of the case study as a mode of exploring complex organisational and institutional fields is elaborated on in the methodology.

The structure of the thesis is as follows. In chapter two, I review the existing literature in more detail paying particular attention to the corporate responses literature but also the recent shift to balance the paradox of embedded agency using the institutional work lens. I also focus on communities as a stakeholder group and note that this has been largely

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[2] Using terms like oil sands and tar sands are highly contested in the province of Alberta. I use the term oil sands here because of its prevalence, and because of its use in existing studies (Lefsrud and Meyer, 2012) and not as a statement of my politics.

overlooked by existing institutional theory. In chapter three I outline the philosophical foundations of the research design, which uses social constructionism and qualitative research methods to investigate the research questions. Chapter four details the case study to provide an overview of the field, the context and nuances of the empirical data. Chapter five considers the way in which local community members resistant to oil sands extraction and environmentalists, described here collectively as social movement actors, adopted the bearing witness logic of protest to bring to public attention their environmental and social concerns. I outline the environmental mechanisms that caused this and describe the types of activities used by the actors. I also develop a typology of identities used by the social movement actors to bear witness.

The sixth chapter considers the corporate responses to the three stakeholder groups involved in the logic of bearing witness, the public as the concerned audience, the environmental NGOs as architects and transmitters of the protest, and communities. Community stakeholders are particular critical, not only because of their ability to voice concerns and create wider controversy, but also because they have a regulatory role within this context. Whilst communities have not been able to stop any project, they can substantially damage its profits by slowing down the consultancy process by taking a new project to hearing. As a result, companies have become proactive in their involvement with communities, seeking to find ways to compromise and influence them outside of the regulatory process. Finally, the fourth part of this chapter considers the establishment of a new organisational form to settle dynamics within the organisational field. This inter-organisational collaboration has a number of benefits to the oil sands companies because they are able to privately agree norms, practices and language, meet with potential influencer stakeholders as well as focus on performance; addressing the environmental concerns that the social movements actors bore witness to. The seventh chapter concludes the thesis by summarising findings and asserting the main contributions of the research. It then discusses the limitations of the study and future research directions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter reviews key contributions to existing organisational and institutional theory with a focus on identifying how organisations respond to the diverse array of institutional pressures they may face. The review is structured as follows. Firstly, I introduce institutional theory and argue that this perspective has effectively emerged as a dominant paradigm for interpreting and exploring organisations. Secondly, I introduce some of the key institutional theory concepts that are applied within the study. In particular, I discuss *organisational fields*. The organisational field is the level of analysis that is used in the study, but in order to understand the constituent parts of the organisational field and the forces that shape and define it, I introduce the concept of *stakeholders*. I suggest that the diverse array of stakeholders within an organisational field and the often conflicting demands that they make on corporations result in organisational fields that are characterised by institutional *complexity*. However, I argue that in order to generate better understandings of corporate responses to institutional complexity, we must focus on the *institutional work* that is conducted by agentic actors within the organisational field. In particular, communities need to be included in our understanding of institutional complexity, especially because they represent critical stakeholder groups in many areas of life. In this case, communities can be important stakeholders because oil sands extraction involves large scale development and environmental consequences that will impact communities living nearby.

The next sections attempt to weave these recent developments in institutional theory with existing literature on corporate responses. However, it will be demonstrated that the existing literature fails to explain how corporations respond to stakeholder pressures under conditions of high institutional complexity. Furthermore, I argue that the existing organisational theory on corporate responses to institutional pressures neglects the potential influence of significant stakeholder groups. More specifically, in certain contexts, communities can be a potent force within organisational fields. I close the section by arguing that the neglect of both institutional work and (in particular) the institutional work conducted by communities has left a considerable gap in organisational and institutional theory.

2.1: Institutional theory

Institutional theory, or more accurately new institutional theory (or neo-institutionalism) is an organizational and sociological interest that considers organizations to be more than rational, efficient entities, or "production machines" (Lawrence, Suddaby and Leca, 2009; p.2) and recognises that they are also influenced by institutional pressures and embedded in a social and political environment (Powell, 2007; Suchman, 1995). Neo-institutionalism is interested in the role that state, societal and cultural pressures and norms have on organizational behaviour, not just market forces and resource scarcity (Oliver, 1991). Consequently legitimacy, "adherence to regulative, normative and cognitive expectations" (Deephouse and Carter, 2005; p.353) is a central tenet of the theory (Suchman, 1995; Whetton and King, 2008). Institutional theory has now become a dominant theory in management studies (Lawrence et al., 2011; Suddaby, 2010; Vogel, 2012). Institutional theory has often involved historical case studies spanning multiple decades (Hoffman, 1999; Lok, 2010; Lounsbury, 2002; Scott et al., 2000). Alternatively, it has been used to develop rich, detailed case studies (Lawrence et al., 2009). Institutions have been described as enduring social patterns (Hughes, 1936) or social processes that become templates for action, cognition or emotion (Suddaby et al., 2010; DiMaggio and Powell 1983). They are by definition enduring, unless disrupted, and institutional arrangements and scripts continue as long as social interactions are consistently repeated (Berger and Luckman, 1967; Micelotta and Washington, 2013). Thus, organizations and their environments have a permeable boundary (Zald et al., 2002). They are constrained by their environments (Lee and Lounsbury, 2010), but we know less about how they try to influence their environments.

Building on the work of earlier institutional theorists (DiMaggio, 1988; Brint and Karabel, 1991) at around the turn of the millennium, academic attention turned to consider how institutional change takes place despite dominant norms and processes (Dacin, Goodstein and Scott, 2002; Hirsh and Lounsbury, 1997; Seo and Creed, 2002; Scott, 2000). This can happen when actors with privileged field positions - sometimes described as command posts - (Zald and Lounsbury, 2010) skills or powers, can resist the prevailing pressures to conform (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Suddaby and Greenwood, 2006). They may be core actors within the field (Suddaby and Greenwood, 2006), or peripheral outsiders (Hensmans, 2003; Maguire et al., 2004). This literature has been criticised for over-emphasising the hyper muscular hero type change agent (Suddaby, 2010). Hensmans' (2003) study into changes in the music industry demonstrates how actors holding varying levels of radicalisation can work in coalition to bring about change. Neo-institutionalism emphasizes the on-going tension between structure and agency known as "the paradox of embedded

agency" (Koene and Ansari, 2011; Seo and Creed, 2002). That is, how can the actors conditioned by an institution in turn overthrow it? (Holm, 1995; Leca and Naccache, 2006).

Recently, there has been an effort to balance the diverging phases of institutional theory. Early institutional theory focused on the processes of how organizations become similar, structurally and behaviourally, through the forces of isomorphism (Barley and Tolbert, 1997; Deephouse, 1996; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; 1991). This earlier work also focused on how institutions are fixed norms, rules or taken for granted institutionalised scripts (Jepperson, 1991) as well as how institutional actors had little influence over structural constraints because of the "reproduction of institutionalized practices" (Battilana and D'Aunno, 2009; p.31).

This theory has tended to concentrate on large-scale inter-organizational or social transformation, directing attention to macro-level concepts such as institutional change, logics or institutionalization. Such an interest in grand theory rather than micro-level concepts or smaller changes has led to the neglect of daily experience and practices (Suddaby, 2010). However, topics including: sense making (Cornelissen et al., 2011; Maitlis and Sonenshein, 2010); emotion (Voronov and Vince, 2012) and adaptation (Zundel et al., 2013) have begun to gain attention. In this same vein, organizational and field-level responses have also garnered attention in recent years (Pache and Santos, 2010; Greenwood et al. 2011). This thesis contributes to this neglected area of research. In particular, the study of relationships between organisations and their wider institutional field lacks empirical investigation. Furthermore, this research seeks to address a recent call to develop new ways of considering institutional process and not simply institutional outcomes (Suddaby 2010; p.16). In looking closely at an on-going set of processes and relations in real time across an institutional field, the study examines the coal-face of institutionalism (Barley 2008a; Suddaby, 2010). In addition, the study redresses an empirical gap in this literature by applying in-depth qualitative research methods and analysis as opposed to the arguably reductionist quantitative methods that have typically been applied within this literature.

2.2: Organizational Fields

Whilst some have focused on how an individual company or organization responds to environmental pressures, DiMaggio and Powell (1983) state that it is at the organizational field level that environmental processes act to influence organizational behaviours (Pache

and Santos 2010). The organisational field may be composed of multiple dimensions and its constituents may be heterogeneous. Furthermore, a field is not based just around a technology or industry, but can also concern a specific issue or a particular set of issues (Hoffman, 1999). Consequently, an organizational field resides between organizations and wider society; thus societal expectations percolate (Koene and Ansari, 2011; Scott and Meyer, 1994). An organization field is a group of similar organizations that work with a shared meaning system (Scott, 2001). The field often becomes an arena of debate (Hoffman, 1999). Any group or individual imposing coercive, normative or cognitive influence or pressures on an organization or set of organizations can be said to be part of the organizational field (Hoffman, 1999; Scott, 2001). Consequently, this can be local or international publics, governments, funders, trade or professional associations or other actors or special interest groups (Hoffman, 1999). This means that the field can be plural, complex and vague (Elsbach and Sutton, 1992; Greenwood et al, 2011). They are also temporary and changing (Hoffman, 1999). Meyer and Powell's (1977) conceptualisation of the field emphasised the important role of networks, sharing and interaction amongst actors within and across the field. Hoffman (1999) found that universities, professional associations and training facilities are spaces where social understanding is determined. However, we know less about how actors deliberately create spaces for sharing and establishing meanings, or the ways in which they try to find other relational spaces (Kellogg, 2009).

Increasingly, since Hoffman's study of the chemical industry (1999), organizational fields have been considered political arenas based around issues rather than similar organizations. Organizational fields involve organizations and individuals with contrasting as well as aligning understandings of issues that may be based on different logics (Thornton et al., 2012). Zietsma and Lawrence, in their study of the forestry industry, determined that the organizational field they studied was both a grouping of shared meaning and an arena of conflict (2010; p.214). They also make an important observation that despite 'noise and action at the perimeter' life continued 'on the inside' of the field.

Zeistma and Lawrence find that field-level change occurs when multiple actions from multiple actors accumulate to eventually create conditions for change to happen (p.214). Despite organizational fields being a taken-for-granted concept in institutional theory, we know little about it. Few studies have focused on which actors can be said to be in such a space, how they might work together or against each other, and how different actors and groups consider those within this arena of conflict. Globalization creates increased

institutional complexity for corporations (Yaziji and Doh 2009). This leads to an institutional field that is no longer geographically defined but often globalized and virtual (Scott, 2001). However such a conceptualization has created a recent blind spot in that local stakeholders, such as geographical communities, are overlooked by theorists if not by corporations.

In this thesis, I use the organisational field as a generalised level of analysis. As such, the field of inquiry includes the totality of relevant organisational actors and institutional agents that comprise the organisational field. In effect, these organisations and actors represent units of analysis. While the particular organisational field that is investigated in this study could be said to be global, in order to define the field in a meaningful way that is conducive to empirical inquiry, I focus on the key actors and the most salient issues that define the state of the field concerning the Albertan oil sands extraction. In the next section, I introduce some of the major players within organisational fields. In particular, I focus on the role of stakeholders.

2.2.1: Stakeholders

Constituents of an institutional field are comparable to stakeholders. Freeman (1984) is considered the forefather of stakeholder theory. His definition of a stakeholder is an individual or organization affected by or able to affect the objectives of an organization (1984; p.46). Clarkson (1995) differentiates between primary and public stakeholders. Primary stakeholders are staff members, shareholders and investors, consumers and those in the supply chain, whereas the 'public stakeholder group' are the government and communities. Some stakeholder models do not allow for community as a stakeholder group at all (Yaziji and Doh 2009). Perhaps community is a more significant social grouping and concept in rural distant spaces or in non-Western urban environments. It is known that stakeholders questioning the legitimacy of a firm or its behaviour may create "social risk" for that firm (Hillman et al., 2001; Kytle and Ruggie, 2005). Stakeholders are often divided into primary and secondary groups (Clarkson, 1995). Primary stakeholders are those with a close financial connection to a company such as shareholders, investors, employees, customers and suppliers (Clarkson, 1995). Whereas, secondary stakeholders are those individuals and groups that do not have a direct financial relationship with the organisation. Some (such as Hillman and Keim, 2001) consider communities as primary stakeholders also. However, the institutional role and capacity of community stakeholder groups has not received much empirical attention.

A range of other stakeholders have been considered important for bringing about change within an organization or institutional field, such as employee groups (Kostova and Roth 2002; Scully and Segal 2002; Wright et al., 2012) and shareholders (David et al., 2007; Logsdon and Van Buren, 2008; Rehbein, Waddock et al. 2004). Which stakeholder has the most salience may depend on the lifecycle of a corporation (Jawahar and McLaughlin, 2001).

From its inception, stakeholder theory was concerned with strategically managing stakeholders for corporate interest (Freeman, 1984; Frooman, 1999) although some literature has also considered the importance of the normative aspects of the theory (Donaldson and Preston, 1995). Institutional theory has largely overlooked the role of local communities on institutional fields or organizations. The work of Marquis et al. (2010) is a rare exception to this. This may be because institutional constituents are those who get involved in debate and exert institutional pressures. However, this overlooks the role of organizations or other field-level collaborations in affecting communities. Freeman (1984) in his seminal study notes that stakeholders are not just able to affect performance but also those affected by an organization.

In effect, stakeholders are key holders of institutional power and influence, but the nature of their ability to act as change agents varies widely across different stakeholder groups. I have suggested that extant work on stakeholders has largely neglected the role of communities, apart from paying lip service to their existence. Partly, this neglect stems from the belief that communities are marginal actors, lacking significant influence over the structure and direction of organisational fields. However, in the following sections I will argue that communities (under particular conditions), among other stakeholder groups, are a key component of organisational fields. Furthermore, I suggest that the issues and demands and unique position of communities within organisational fields can greatly add to the competing interests and pressures across different stakeholder groups. In other words, communities greatly contribute to and can significantly alter institutional complexity.

2.2.2: Institutional complexity

Many existing studies have framed institutional pressures as a contest between two logics: the dominant field logic and the jolting logic of another challenger logic which in turn becomes dominant (Greenwood et al., 2011; Meyer 1982). More recently institutional theory has turned its attention to institutional complexity. This is used now as a synonym for

pluralism (Kraatz and Block, 2008; Greenwood et al., 2011). This is the state in which there are multiple and conflicting pressures, such as raised concerns or specific demands felt within an organisational field. For example, few studies have recognised the role of more than two pressures or logics.

As Greenwood et al. (2011) point out; literature considering responses to complexity is scarce. There are two streams of literature that focus on understanding field-level institutional complexity. One strand focuses on how such pluralism is captured within organizational hybrids, structures or practices (Battilana and Dorado, 2010; Marquis and Lounsbury, 2010; Tracey, Phillips, and Jarvis, 2011).The second stream of literature, which is the main consideration in this study, focuses on organizational responses to complex institutional pressures. Here I mean strategies or tactics used to respond to institutional pressures, whether direct or indirect (Kraatz and Block, 1998; Oliver, 1991; Pache and Santos, 2010). These response strategies are used by organizations, and their field-level collaborative structures (inter-organizational or professional associations) in order to maintain the status quo and thus retain their positions. Some interests get prioritised over others when a range of demands are made (Greenwood et al., 2011). These tend to relate to who makes them, how they do this, and what they demand (den Hond and de Bakker 2007; Pache and Santos, 2010). However, while there is an emerging literature that is exploring organisational responses to institutional pressures, considerable theoretical gaps in this body of knowledge remain. The gaps in this literature that are addressed by this study will be outlined in following sections.

Transnational companies, such as oil companies, can be important change agents and are more likely to experience institutional complexity (Koene and Ansari, 2011; Levy, 2008). This is because they face multiple stakeholder groups and differing values across borders. Practices perceived as normal in some contexts are contested in others due to historic, cultural or political differences (Koene and Ansari, 2011). Contexts and expectations often differ locally, in the MNE home country and internationally. There are risks in translating accepted norms to local contexts; we know less about when a local context is supportive but a wider audience is not.

Neo-institutional theory has tended to focus on powerful, successful members of the developed world (Battilana, 2006; Marti and Mair, 2009). For example, Khan et al. (2007) focused on the unanticipated consequences of non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

campaigns on the lives of football makers and their families. Lawrence et al. (2002) were concerned with how the collaborative activity of an NGO in Palestine could initiate change. Despite calls for this (Stern and Barley; Marti and Mair, 2009), there has been limited focus on how marginal actors are influenced or attempt to influence institutions. We also know little about the consequences of maintaining powerful institutional arrangements for those with less power. Institutional theory has largely overlooked the fact that institutions arise when well-resourced, powerful actors do what is best for their own interests (DiMaggio, 1988; Marti and Mair, 2009). A key question, therefore, emerges: are less powerful and less resourced actors able to contest such institutional work, and if so, how?

As previously mentioned, different stakeholder groups can vary markedly in terms of their ability to influence organisational fields. This is not to say that less powerful and less resourced actors are rendered impotent in the face of powerful organisational interests. However, existing organisational theory lacks insight into how less powerful and under-resourced stakeholders can enact field-level institutional change. A key aspect of this thesis is to unravel how communities can encourage corporate responses to address their issues and demands. A recent stream of literature has emphasised the role of how 'institutional work' by agentic actors, such as community or environmental stakeholders, or corporate executives and organisations, can lead to field-level institutional change (or inertia).

2.2.3: Institutional work

Institutional work is a new branch of institutional theory that focuses on purposive action of individuals and organizations aimed at "creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions" (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006; 215). It offers a new research agenda that combines existing literature to create new areas of study, specifically around day-to-day activity conducted by actors (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2009). It concerns itself with developing rich case studies that develop insight and theory into the practical action of actors trying to create, maintain and disrupt institutions (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2009). Early neo-institutional research overlooked agency, instead focusing on how structures carried the myths of institutional environments (Meyer and Rowan, 1997; Owen-Smith and Powell, 2008). This research focused greatly on isomorphism and tended to focus at the field level of analysis. As well as overlooking the role of individuals in creating, maintaining or disrupting activity, this also made institutional theory difficult to teach and translate beyond the academy (Miner, 2003; Lawrence and Suddaby, 2009) perhaps because it suggests that managers and other actors are tied to existing arrangements.

Institutional work does not represent a new idea. It is perhaps best understood as a new categorisation of some of the traditional interests of institutional theorists (Lawrence, Suddaby and Leca, 2009; Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). Institutional work builds on existing theory to focus on the purposive and practical action taken by actors or organizations that is "aimed at creating, maintaining and disrupting" (Lawrence, Suddaby and Leca, 2009; p.1). This approach seeks to balance perceptions of actors as either cultural dopes or hyper-muscular (ibid). It also recognises that institutions are not just created or disrupted, but also actively maintained. Organizational fields and institutions have often been presumed to have a taken-for-granted and unproblematic quality (Greenwood and Hinings, 1996; Jepperson, 1991). Little is known, however, about how institutions are maintained (Scott, 2001). The creation or disruption of institutions has been the traditional interest of institutional theory (Quinn, Trank and Washington, 2009). However institutional work recognises that actors must work creatively, actively and deliberately to maintain stable states (Currie et al., 2012; Dacin et al., 2010; Lok and Rond, 2013; Micelotta and Washington, 2013; Zeitsma and Lawrence, 2010). Actors work to maintain the status quo. This may be to hold on to their own privileged positions (Micelotta and Washington, 2013) or those of others, as demonstrated by the study into fine dining in Cambridge colleges, and its relationship to the maintenance of the British class system(Dacin et al., 2010) Maintenance work may be about priming a new generation to upper class tastes and manners, by those "custodians" of tradition (Dacin and Dacin, 2008), such as college staff who perform duties akin to servants, but who work to preserve rituals and traditions, without residing in privileged social positions themselves.

There are different types of maintenance work. Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) detected two major types. One is centred on policing processes and establishing standards (Quinn, Trank and Washington, 2009). The other is based on the cognitive and normative institutional pillars and ways of internalising meanings and stories into practices (Dacin et al., 2010; Zilber 2002; Zilber 2009). Dacin et al. (2010) study the activities described as organizational rituals, involved in shaping and socialising new cohorts of students to the ways of Cambridge dining in order to conserve the reputation of a prestigious university and bring about individual transformations in the students who attend, which in turn are inferred to contribute to the maintenance of the British class system. Lok and de Rond's (2012) ethnographic study of Cambridge's rowing team sheds light on the micro-level practices that institutional custodians undertake to ensure the persistence of a tradition such as the Cambridge-Oxford boat race. Once again, maintenance work is related closely to the maintenance of tradition within an elite setting. However, we know less about how maintenance work is conducted in a relatively new field or by a group that is less cohesive

than a sports team or university college. Lok and De Rond (2012) found three main types of maintenance work taking place: normalization (ignoring or excepting and co-opting), negotiation work (tolerating or reversing) and custodial work (reinforcing or self-correcting or formal disciplining). They also found a temporal dimension at play, with actors first containing practice breakdowns (through ignoring, tolerating or reinforcing) and then restoring stability (through excepting and co-opting, reversing and self-correcting or formal disciplining).

Quinn, Trank and Washington's (2009) empirical setting is also university life. In their empirical paper they explore the institutional work of a professional legitimating organization, an accrediting body for business schools (AACSB). This organisation acts as a "public vehicle and symbolic touchstone" of complex institutional arrangements (p.236) but has more benefits for middle-ranked universities than their prestigious counterparts. Besides instituting compliance procedures, the association actively established cognitive and normative benefits. Business schools with accreditation were able to gain reputational benefits through being part of an elite set. A professional association is also an important organization for maintenance work in the Italian legal profession (Micelotta and Washington, 2013). In this study, privileged actors wish to maintain self-regulation of the Italian legal profession. They re-establish a stable order by countering a disruption in four ways: "re-asserting the norms of institutional interaction; re-establishing the balance of institutional power; regaining institutional leadership; and reproducing institutionalized practices" (Micelotta and Washington, 2013; p.138).

As demonstrated above, institutional work may be witnessed at various levels, contexts and actions. Effectively, however, the role of institutional work is to influence an outcome or set of outcomes that change, maintain or disrupt the character of existing institutions. This thesis is principally concerned with the impact of institutional work on an organisational field dominated by a powerful contingent of corporations. Therefore, in assessing the efficacy of institutional work, the key outcome of interest is corporate responses to the institutional work of various stakeholders. However, this is not to say that this outcome is the principal rationale of the thesis. As already mentioned, understanding the micro-level processes of institutional work and how various stakeholders express their agency is also a key area of theoretical interest. The next section outlines the processes through which organisations respond to various institutional pressures. In particular, I focus on the seminal contributions of Oliver (1991) and her typology of corporate response to institutional pressures.

2.3: Corporate Responses

Whilst much literature using institutional theory has considered isomorphism, more recent research has begun to consider corporate strategic choice (Delmas and Toffel 2008; Oliver, 1991). Corporations, or rather their internal representation, have agency over how they respond to stakeholder pressures, such as direct demands, which are "filtered and enacted differently by different organizations" (Greenwood and Hinings 1996; Pache and Santos 2010; p.457). How corporations respond, can be particularly difficult when stakeholders' demands are multiple and contradictory. This is particularly the case with communities where they are naturally heterogeneous and likely to be less structured and coherent than many other entities within a field. Furthermore, stakeholders might pressure companies on environmental issues but also want economic opportunities or prosperity for their communities.

Meznar and Nigh (1995) describe two kinds of responses: buffering and bridging. They state that firms choose whether to consider their role in society as profit-maximization and legal compliance, or as social beings that are "answerable" to social constituents (ibid.; p.975). They see public affairs as the organizational function responsible for maintaining external legitimacy (ibid.). This is in contrast with Hoffman (1999) who considers that technical and operational functions are needed to address stakeholder influence strategies relating to the environment. Meznar and Nigh (1995) focus on American firms, and so do not consider the international institutional context of MNCs (Koene and Ansari, 2011). For example Western stakeholders, such as NGOs, media and consumers, as well as the local stakeholders in host countries, may all have particular perspectives regarding corporate behaviour. They consider two stakeholder groups: government and community (Meznar and Nigh, 1995). They see the dual role of public affairs as "window-out" which monitors and understands external change, and "window-in" through which society can influence corporate policy and practice (Meznar and Nigh 1995; p.976). However, in an international context, and with multiple stakeholder groups demanding change, there will be multiple windows-in and windows-out. Meznar and Nigh find that environmental complexity contributed to an increase in buffering and bridging activities but do not examine how this occurs. Neither do they investigate how a company, or field, will be able to influence and alter their environment.

Their concept of buffering includes ignoring demands, or lobbying to preserve the firm's situation. Additionally, a firm may try to avoid external influences using PACs, or advocacy advertising (Meznar and Nigh 1995). These responses are described in more detail by Oliver (1991) as *avoidance, defiance* and *manipulation* strategies. They aim to retain control and resist meeting stakeholder demands. Meznar and Nigh's (1995) alternative concept is bridging. This is similar to Oliver's (1991) responses, *acquiescence* and *compromise*. Oliver's framework continues to offer the best typology of strategic responses to institutional pressures (Pache and Santos 2010). However, there are several drawbacks with such frameworks. Firstly, it is possible for a range of responses to be used simultaneously, especially when they seek to meet contradictory demands across a range of stakeholders within an organizational field. Greenwood et al. (2011) point out that this is not considered by the existing literature. Secondly, determining the nature of the response is subjective, and a single response may have different effects on different stakeholders. For example, an MNC might argue that a Sustainability Report is an acquiescence strategy. However, an NGO might consider it to be concealment of environmental damage; it could be a silencing strategy for the media and a way to balance shareholders' demands for high profits with campaigners' demands for environmental improvement. Part of the difficulty in responding, as well as part of reason for the stakeholder demands, is that globalization leads to a gap between local and global institutional pressure. This is not currently examined in the literature, and there may be very different local norms to global norms or pressures.

2.3.1: Institutional perspectives on corporate responses

Early institutional theory suggested that organizations conformed to environmental pressures and did not present a response repertoire (Scott, 2008). Oliver (1991) used resource dependency theory to counter this assumption and outline a range of responses that can be used by organizations. This can be conformity or acquiescence, but this is extremely difficult in a complex institutional environment (Greenwood et al., 2011). Compromise can be a way of dealing with an inconsistent or contested institutional environment (D'Aunno, Sutton and Price, 1991; Friedland and Alford, 1991). One way to compromise with pluralism is to compartmentalise groups and to attempt response strategies that address particular needs or concerns (Kraatz and Block, 2008), or to build relations with them. Another strategy is to avoid scrutiny through concealment, buffering activity or loose coupling (Oliver, 1991; Scott, 2008). A further countering response is to demonstrate defiance.

Oliver (1991) provides a rare example of a typology of corporate strategic responses that they enact to respond to institutional pressures. There are several issues with it. Determining a 'response' is not a straightforward activity. Oliver assumes a realist ontology that allows for easy characterisation of behaviour. However, responses (both their selection and actors' understanding of them) are socially constructed. For example silence can be seen as a hostile avoidance strategy or a delay whilst an organization searches for a way to conform. Furthermore, strategies can be aimed at the stakeholder group that has made a particular demand or raised a concern, or at the issue they determine to be most pertinent. For example, an organization could state that they are concerned with environmental challenges, but be dismissive of a leading environmental group that has raised these concerns in the public domain.

Furthermore, Oliver's (1991) typology does not fully consider who within an organization would work on such issues. Neither does the typology consider that, to those working on the 'front line', not all of these options may seem available. It also suggests, because it is not empirically tested, that those with agentic influence may be manipulating their environment, rather than meandering through their everyday experience and situations. Furthermore, it does not recognise that those working within companies or at the field level will be responding to differing and creative expressions of demands, disappointments or understandings of what the company does. These stakeholders will hold vastly diverging perspectives and seek different outcomes. They might not air their concerns or demands at the organization or even industry directly, but instead seek out the public, media or government as the change agents. Another issue with Oliver's (1991) work is that (as is typical of institutional theorists) its language may seem 'heavy', perhaps even conspiratorial, perhaps seeking to manipulate or control. Such strategies are unlikely to be acknowledged or perceived by executives as their agenda. As a result, the typology may be difficult to apply in an empirical context. Pache and Santos (2010) further recognise that it lacks predictive power.

However, despite its shortcomings, the paper was important because it combined ideas from resource dependency theory with institutional theory. This led to consideration of how actors played agentic roles in deciding on organizational responses to stakeholders and other sources of institutional pressure. By today's standards, however, the conceptualisation does not go far enough in understanding how actors within organisational fields are maintaining, creating or dismantling institutions and responding to demands (Lawrence et al., 2006; 2009). Kraatz and Block (2008) also devise a typology based on a review of previous

institutional literature with a particular focus on American universities and how they balance multiple identities. Their typology suggests that organisations seek to eliminate pluralism, similar to Oliver's defiance responses, compartmentalise activities through decoupling, rein in pluralism by balancing demands or finding cooperative solutions, and (finally) create a new institutional order. However precisely how such activity is conducted is unclear, for example, are corporations reining in stakeholders, issues, or solutions? These responses to institutional pluralism[3] are based on Pratt and Foreman's organisational identities work. They represent a useful starting point in thinking about institutional complexity but they do not offer strategies that deal specifically with stakeholder groups.

Below I briefly describe other key strategies employed by corporations. These are: collaborating with stakeholders, improving their environmental policy, symbolic action and reframing.

The MNC may bridge by working with stakeholders as partners, bringing about institutional change, improving environmental performance and exceeding legislation (Meznar and Nigh 1995; Hoffman 1999). Corporations may collaborate with NGOs in order to bring about new policies or reporting (Yaziji and Doh 2009; Hernes and Mikalsen 2002). However, this is difficult for corporations who may worry that NGOs will try to seek further 'dirt' on them (Argenti 2004). It is also difficult to persuade some NGOs to collaborate because they risk their own legitimacy or being co-opted (Teegan et al., 2004; Yaziji, 2004; Yaziji and Doh 2009). Working on issues without such input from NGOs risks accusations ('lashing') of green washing (Bansal and Clelland, 2004).

If demands are for environmental improvements, then one form of acquiescence is corporate ecological responsiveness. Much of the literature on this finds that it takes place in fields or industries, notably the Chemical industry, rather than individual firms (Hoffman 1999; Bansal and Roth 2000; King and Lenox 2000; Hoffman and Ocasio 2001). Considering environmental performance on a macro-level may be easier than on a firm-level, as MNCs may be sensitive to providing information about alternative responses. Alternatively this could be an attempt to create industry standards or avoid regulation by proactively pre-empting such regulatory pressure. Furthermore, the range of alternative responses would

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[3] Institutional complexity and institutional pluralism have been used interchangeably (Greenwood et al., 2008).

take place in different departments (for example, technical/engineering, press, management and marketing) (Delmas and Toffel 2008).

Corporations may find it easier to engage in symbolic action (Meyer and Rowan 1977; Fiss and Zajac 2006). This is especially the case if they are driven by legitimacy worries, rather than managerial concern or regulation (Bansal and Roth 2000). This can be carried out through public relations (PR) and advertising strategies, environmental reporting or community development work which does not address the real demands of the community stakeholder, for example to stop polluting (Frynas 2005; Greenwood 2007). Corporations may offset their actions by providing philanthropy or development unrelated to the initial stakeholder complaint, in order to appease or improve their reputation (Brammer and Pavelin 2006; Marquis, et al. 2007; Brammer, et al. 2009).

Another strategy is for corporations to reframe the argument away from the complaint, for example by discussing economic growth or what is culturally appropriate (Hensman 2003; Bansal and Clelland 2004). Hensmans (2003) describes how demonstrators can be declared "'anarchists' and 'criminals' who are not contributing anything to the 'debate'" (p.359). This lowers stakeholder legitimacy, neutralises their arguments and weakens their ability to use mediators such as the media or consumers to apply pressure (ibid.; p.369). Thus, policies and discursive practices are likely to be used to ensure that firms retain power.

As I have shown above, corporate responses are diverse, and can be carried out concurrently. Firms may have to decide which stakeholder they are most concerned to appease, or carry out a range of responses aimed at reaching particular stakeholder groups. In the next section I consider which characteristics affect how a firm responds to environmental demands, as well as which characteristics make an MNC more vulnerable to stakeholder pressure. In the section that follows I discuss some of the firm level idiosyncrasies and field level contextual conditions that may affect corporate responses. This is highly important when using organisational fields as a level of analysis as opposed to some other level that is defined by administration or geographical borders. In particular, I focus on *employees, social movement actors* and *communities*.

2.3.2: Firm and field level characteristics that effect responses

Pache and Santos (p.456) note that not every organization will experience demands in the same way since it can be said to be "filtered and enacted" in different ways (Greenwood and Hinings 1996; Lounsbury 2001). This can be a consequence of peripheral actors such as regulators, funders or professional or trade associations who absorb some of the pressure.

Those inside the organization, who either by coincidence or hiring strategies (Lounsbury 2001) will have distinct personal perspectives and experience that may help determine how they address institutional pressures. Lounsbury (2001) provides an example of this in his study of how recycling shifted from a social movement to a mainstream institutional practice. Internal representatives, such as staff members, volunteers, board members or senior management (Pache and Santos, 2010) perceive the institutional environment and subsequently decide how best to respond. Aside from Pache and Santos, there is limited research concerning conditions under which particular response strategies will be selected (2010; p.456).

2.3.2.1: Challenging the idea of a 'response'

Typically, the neo-institutional literature has referred to the way in which an organization interacts with its external environment as a 'response'. There are three issues with such a conceptualisation. Firstly, as Bowen et al. (2010) acknowledge in their study of community engagement, corporate behaviour has moved away from reactively 'responding' to particular, specific demands of stakeholders, in their case community members, and now proactively monitors and engages with multiple layers of its social environment. Secondly, environments can influence what strategies organizations can deploy (Scott, 2008). It is also important to recognise that employees or targeted organisations can determine how the environment is understood, what issues are considered important and how the organisation can best respond. Recent studies have focused on how issue salience determines the uptake of stakeholder issues (Waldron et al., 2013). Employees may feel the need to respond to issues that relate to their business, such as climate change, rather than a particular group (Le, 2013). Thirdly, responses cannot be understood without understanding the nature of the institutional pressure, demands, or concerns raised. Pache and Santos (2010) determine that the nature of demands can be divided into *goals* and *means*. However, the constituent holding the means and goal is also important, as is what motivates the goal and means, as well as how this is interpreted by those inside organizations. Whether goals fit with the organization's agenda, and whether it invokes harmony or conflict, are relevant (Pache and Santos 2010). Those working within companies then learn how to satisfy demands from constituents they deem important, and when the goals and motives of these actors are seen as legitimate.

2.3.2.2: Role of employees

Employees are instrumental in determining how an MNC responds to stakeholder pressure (Lounsbury and Pollack 2001; Scully and Segal 2002; Wright et al., 2012) as are managers

(Meznar and Nigh 1995; Rodriguez, Siegel et al. 2006). Meznar and Nigh found that top managements' "collaborative pioneering philosophy" was the strongest predictor of bridging activity (1995; p.991). A pre-existing dynamic capability within the firm affects responses (Julian, Ofori-Dankwa et al. 2008). Meznar and Nigh, examining a highly regulated environment (the USA), found that the larger a company, the more buffering takes place, but not the more bridging. More recently it has been found that the identities and narratives of self of the experts (such as geologists, sustainability managers and consultants) play crucial roles in determining their responses to climate change (Lefsrud and Meyer, 2012; Wright et al. 2012). This also stresses another important issue: that sometimes employees may seek to respond to circumstances (such as their perceptions of climate change) rather than to specific stakeholders. Internal representatives or groups with different motivations, identities or understandings can also place demands or influence change, either in activity or in meanings about organizational activity (Lounsbury, 2001; Zilber 2002). Fiss and Zajac (2004) also found that employees and shareholders were important conduits of institutional pressure. Barley and Tolbert (1997) show that organizations are pluralistic and able to shape and are shaped by pressures. It has been recognised that staff hired by a company may adhere to normative or cognitive templates (Pache and Santos 2010) but staff may also create these templates, from their own cultural and political toolkits (Kellogg, 2010) and from their own previous experience and identities (Wright et al 2012).

2.3.2.3: Social movement actors[4]

Organizational research considering social movement actors and "organizations as targets of social movements" is limited, but growing (Davis et al. 2008; p.390). It considers social movement actors' abilities to bring about cultural changes (Weber, et al. 2008) and create new markets (Lounsbury 2001). Markets for specific products are affected "by conflict and collective action" (Zald, 2008; p.568). McCarthy and Zald (1977) sparked the interest in combining organization and social movement research when they considered resource mobilization. Social movements are now "pervasive in and around organizations, from policing the actions of multinationals to advancing demands for workplace rights" (Davis Morrill et al, 2008; p.390).

Social movements are represented by formal organizations (Davis Morrill et al, 2008; p.389) or are "loosely organized coalitions with a goal of contesting prominent social and

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[4] This section on social movement actors was submitted as part of my 'transfer document' in 2010.

cultural practices" (Weber et al. 2008; p.531). Tarrow (1988) suggests that a social movement is contentious, sustained over time, based on social networks and uses collective action frames to target powerful elites (Tarrow, 1988; p.3). Protest repertoires are used (Tilly, 2004). Traditionally, social movements were aimed at contesting political elites, for example with the Civil Rights movement (Andrews, 2001) and Antislavery (King and Haveman, 2008).

Strategies that these social movement actors use can be "reformist, revolutionary and reactionary" in "political, economic and social domains", and aim to generate "social, political and cultural" changes (Weber et al, 2008; p.532). Much of the existing focus of the literature has been on reformist strategies, such as recycling strategies (Lounsbury, 2001) or renewable energy (Sine and Lee, 2009). There is an emphasis on examining institutional change that focuses on social movement actors looking to enter the market, such as with grass-fed meat (Weber et al. 2008).

However, there is far less focus on how stakeholders, especially community stakeholders, can use opportunities, resources and framing to contest existing practices directly (Benford and Snow 2000). In this way, stakeholders become a type of institutional or "cultural entrepreneur" aiming to use story-telling to change the legitimacy of particular practices (Lounsbury and Glynn 2001) but without seeking wealth creation. There is little focus on the internal dynamics of such a stakeholder group. Furthermore, there is inadequate attention paid to the role of "cultural trends, field-level organizations [and standards] and state apparatus" in the generation of change (Weber et al. 2008; p.563). Due to "social and technological shifts" social movements are changing "strategies and routines" (Davis et al. 2008; p.389). Existing literature focuses on corporate responses, for example to boycotters (King, 2008) or to a particular stakeholder (Scully and Segal 2002; Lee and Lounsbury 2010) but does not consider the dynamic and networked relationship that these groups have over time.

2.3.2.4: Community
This section considers definitions and ways of understanding community. There are a number of ways of conceptualising community (Freeman and Audia, 2006; Greenwood et al., 2011; Marquis et al., 2011). The term community is ambiguous and often used to describe a range of social entities. One shared characteristic is that the term is used as a positive way to describe the collective. Marquis and Battilana (2009) define communities as

"populations, organizations or markets located in a geographical territory and sharing, as a result of their common location, elements of local culture, norms, identity and laws". There are affiliation or interest communities as well as geographically bound groups (Brint, 2001), and sometimes these communities are also instrumentally created (O'Mahony and Lakhani, 2010). These definitions overlook the shared ethnic or cultural identity that those living in the same place are likely to have. As this section goes on to discuss, aboriginal communities in particular often have strong ties and identities as well as geographical co-locations.

2.3.2.4.1: Geographical Units
Communities may be geographical colocations of people living in close physical proximity such as a neighbourhood or town or other form of residential group (Tuan 2002; Freeman and Audia, 2006). In this way, local people, civic society or residents are used as synonyms (Whiteman et al 2004). Community is a subcategory of society. Spatial, territorial and geographically bound elements of communities are still frequently missing from theory (Thornton et al., 2012). It can denote meaningful social relations (Marquis et al 2007). It can also provide connotations of social proximity such as those families or citizens living closely (Marquis et al 2008). When Greenwood et al. (2010) refer to community they use this as a synonym for region. However, the term is often used to describe a group that is small, oppressed and lacking power (Berry, 2003; 3). In this study, I use the term to imply a much smaller unit than a region, similar to a village or small town. Community here is often used as a synonym for a small aboriginal settlement or First Nation residing in a particular area. A First Nation is the term used to describe a Canadian aboriginal community with treaty rights and 'Indian' status. Thus it implies not just sharing the same geography, but also having shared family ties, personal and collective history and shared cultural practices, for example celebrations or traditional ecological knowledge (Whiteman and Cooper, 2000). Because many people are part of the same First Nation, as well as sharing the same geographical base, they are also likely to have shared family ties, personal and collective history and cultural similarities.

When members of a community become opposed to a development, they are often described as "grassroots activists" or "local resistance" (Kraemer et al., 2013), but it is important to note that communities are heterogeneous and even particular local activist individuals may change their position towards a company or industry over time (Kraemer et al, 2013). Alternatively, terms such as grassroots, oil bearing or fence line are used, especially in relation to large development and extraction projects, or by environmentalists or other

campaigners (Omeje 2006). Community members may feel direct changes or impact as a consequence of the development of the extractive industries (Haller et al., 2007).

In this way the community becomes described in relation or contrast to development. Community members who become active, as campaigners or protestors, are likely to be motivated by a sense of fear or a threat posed by a particular case of pollution or an extraction site, for example. Environmentalists may be more likely to be motivated by a post-material concern for environmental issues or climate change (Rootes, 2004). This means that they are more likely to see issues as a global problem rather than a local issue. They may also have different socio-economic backgrounds as community activists have typically been more likely to be poor, female and less educated than professional environmentalists (Rootes, 2004).

2.3.2.4.2: Social groups with shared interest

Community is also used to define a group of actors with overlapping interests or beliefs (Marquis et al., 2010; O'Mahony and Lakhani 2010). This may be a physical or virtual gathering of people working towards a shared goal or having a similar interest or concern. Community has become a loose term used to describe clusters or fields of often diverse organisations or groups with a clear shared interest (Marquis et al. 2008), such as academic communities (Crane 1972), or open-source communities (von Hippel and von Krogh, 2003; O'Mahony and Ferraro 2007; O'Mahony and Bechky, 2008). This would include the environmental community or those working in informal or formal networks. Community, in this sense, is comparable to an interest group or social movement (Calvano, 2008; Rootes, 2004). Local community groups, based in a particular area may be linked closely, loosely or not at all with national or international movements (Rootes 2004). Often environmentalists or other types of transnational social movement actors are considered separately from local people. Community members are not necessarily passive constituents, they may well protest or behave antagonistically towards a company or industry.

It is typical that environmentalists and local 'grassroots' community members may work together on local campaigns (Kraemer et al., 2013). Environmentalists can offer experience, resources and global publicity for local causes (Kraemer et al., 2013). Relationships between these two types of 'community' may change throughout the life cycle of a campaign (Kraemer et al., 2013). There may also be tensions between NGO campaigners and local people, even after a supposedly successful campaign (Khan et al., 2007).

Meznar and Nigh (1995) considered only government and community as the key socio-political constituents for firms. Yazih and Doh (2009) have begun to explore the issues around NGO corporate dynamics. It is understood that NGOs might vary in terms of radicalism, ideology and strategies for targeting corporations (den Hond and der Bakker 2007; Hensmans 2003). It has been said that we now live in a "corporate society" where corporations have become the most prominent actors in society (Barley, 2008b) and Neoliberalism has shrunk the size and power of Western democratic governments. There is a gap in terms of who will hold the MNC to account (Yazih and Doh, 2009). This also leads to corporations taking on roles that previously would have been considered the preserve of government, such as dealing with social issues in a community close to their operations. Increasingly, it is NGOs that are filling this space and attempting to hold companies, both MNCs and solely domestic businesses, to account. These individuals, however, do not require the industry to provide them with money or jobs, enabling them to be more outspoken against the industry. Corporations are likely to respond differently to these organizations than to communities. However, little is known about how they will respond, or how NGO demands will alter how the firm responds. Increasingly, it is the natural environment that communities or NGOs voice concern over (Zeitsma and Lawrence, 2010; Kraemer et al., 2013). This is a rise in concern for the environment (Hoffman 1999; Carson, 1968). Further, environmental damage or risk legitimates demands for money, employment or other social support from those near or downstream, who have been impacted by the industry (Bowen et al., 2010).

How social movements and corporations relate and respond to each other has been of interest to both social movements and organizational scholars in recent years (McAdam and Scott, 2005; Zald, Morrill and Rao, 2005). On occasions, environmental NGOs are included, sometimes as 'public organizations' within an understanding of a corporation's stakeholders (Yaziji and Doh, 2009). Non-government organizations do not just engage with corporations but also with governments and publics (Doh and Guay, 2006). Management literature has often ignored their role in influencing organizations or fields. Existing literature often considers successful campaigns (Eesley and Lennox, 2006) or those able to engender change (Fineman and Clarke, 1996). Thus this literature stream focuses on institutional change (Rao, Monin and Durand, 2003) and institutional entrepreneurship (such as Lawrence et al., 2002; Battilana, Leca and Boxenbaum, 2009) and the creation of new organizational forms (Rao, Morrill, and Zald, 2000) rather than on the daily institutional

work of actors trying to influence institutional legitimacy of a practice, technology or industry.

2.3.2.4.3: Aboriginal community

Aboriginal communities are made up of people who have a shared history, culture and geographical identity that may be different from settlers (Whiteman and Cooper, 2004; ETC). Definitions are difficult, culturally sensitive and geographically determined (Beteille, 1998). In the past, researchers (typically anthropologists, and public policy makers) have used terms that are now strongly out of favour such as 'tribe', 'primitive' or, more recently, 'disadvantaged' (Beteille, 1998). Aboriginal communities are likely to have a distinct identity and different relations to their physical environment, and they may still practise traditional land stewardship (Whiteman 2004; Jolly et al., 2011). There is a risk that communities of this kind are imagined to be bush living, when many people, if not entire communities, may live in permanent village residences (McCormack, 2010; Whiteman, 2010). The term First Nation in Canada describes certain groups or 'bands' of aboriginal people who were given 'First Nations status' by white settlers at the end of the nineteenth century, when they were asked to sign treaties (McCormack, 2010). They describe themselves as 'nations'. Treaty rights are still contentious (McCormack, 2010). Canadian First Nations are also highly organised political and social structures with a democratic leadership process, a governance structure (known as the band), and infrastructure to run services for their community such as schools and elderly provision (Whiteman, 2010).

Recognition of indigenous status is important because it carries emotional weight, is a UN concern and brings with it an assumption that their traditional ways of life should be preserved. An indigenous community is defined as "having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that have developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the society now prevailing" (Haller, Blachlinger et al. 2007). Not all aboriginal people have experienced colonialism, but this or the threat of Westernisation is a common theme in the lived experience of many aboriginal communities (Banerjee, 2000; Hipwell et al., 2002). Significantly for this research, aboriginal communities "are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories" (Martinez-Cobo 1986). Indigenous peoples can be found throughout the world (Haller, Blachlinger et al. 2007). Some previous organization and management literature has focused on indigenous or aboriginal people (see especially the work of Banerjee in Australia and Whiteman and colleagues in Ontario and Northern Territories, Canada). In recent years there has been a move in Canada to allow aboriginal peoples some

voice in development matters, such as mining at James Bay (Hipwell et al., 2002). Because Canada has many natural resources, such as oil, gold, uranium, salt, aluminium and titanium it has previously been the focus of study (Hipwell et al., 2002; Whiteman and Maman, 2002).

Sharma and Henriques (2005) distinguish between "local community" and "aboriginal groups" in their table showing resource dependence between the firm and the stakeholders and stakeholder influence strategy (p.162). This is because the "local communities" have an interest in gaining "jobs and economic growth" in contrast to the aboriginal groups' desire to lead a livelihood based on subsistence and tradition (Whiteman and Cooper, 2000). Whilst this may be the case, this appears to be an over-simplification, as there may be other normative, cognitive and regulatory differences (Marquis et al., 2007; Whiteman, 2009). Each community is unique and may have different conceptions of justice, particularly in relation to industrial development (Whiteman, 2009).

It may not be accurate to assume that communities have collective agreement. However, levels of community isomorphism influence the nature and level of corporate social action within communities (Marquis et al. 2007; p.925). Furthermore, community organizations that corporations can easily pay increase the level of corporate giving (Marquis, et al. 2007; p.936). Patterns of conformity in corporate social action emerge within local geographical areas (Marquis et al. 2007; p.926). Institutional forces that impact on corporate practices include: cultural cognition, such as locally shared frames of reference, community ideology, identity and values; social normative forces, including non-profit/corporate relations and organizational infrastructure; and regulative forces, such as local policies, laws and regulations (Marquis et al., 2007; p.935). Field cohesion in some industries (a notable example being oil) and the organizational champions for a policy play a role in bringing about, or limiting, change (Bansal and Roth 2000; p.731).

One issue regarding research focusing on communities is that of whether these communities should be anonymous or specified (Whiteman, 2010). In this study, communities are aboriginal and frequently First Nation, although some are Metis. A Metis community does not have 'status' from the Canadian government, but is recognised as an aboriginal group by virtue of their distinct cultural heritage and often mixed European-aboriginal ethnicity. It is worth noting that a community, in the Canadian context, can be made up of more than one First Nation or a combination of First Nation and Metis. However I use the term community

to describe the geographical community, i.e. the settlement. This is consistent with descriptions that community members give and some government and industrial actors use, and is designed to be inclusive, as some First Nation definitions have been oppressive because they have excluded inter-nation or mixed marriages as well as Metis people (interviews with community members, Metis relations coordinator).

2.3.2.4.4: Communities' absence in institutional literature

There was early academic interest in communities and organizations (Tonnies, 1887 but also Marx, Weber, 1922). Notably, Tonnies described the difference between Gemeinschaft (community) and Gesellschaft (society). Selznick (1949) and Zald (1970) considered communities in their seminal studies. It has been noted that in a globalized society, the local may no longer be an important framework for us to understand organizational responses (Scott, 2005). However, the move towards considering institutional logics, building from Friedland and Alford's (1991) much cited chapter "Bringing society back in" could be seen as an acknowledgement that local beliefs, or at least norms and beliefs, vary amongst different groups of interest. Research considering organizational fields has typically overlooked geographical connection (Marquis et al., 2011). Recently, a shift has begun to take place. Greenwood et al., (2010) considered community. Community has recently been added it the typology of central institutional logics; this was overlooked in Thornton's original typology (Thornton, 2004; Thornton et al.' 2012). Friedland and Alford (1991) stated that the central institutions of contemporary capitalist Western countries are: the bureaucratic state, democracy, the nuclear family, Christian religion and capitalist market.

Institutional theory has focused on forces that lie beyond the organizational boundary, notably on social pressures (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991; Scott 1995; Hoffman, 1999). Given this interest, it is surprising that there has been relatively little attention paid to communities, and corporate community relations. One exception to this is Zietsma and Lawrence (2010). Their case study focuses on the forestry industry and controversy over clear cutting practices. They interviewed environmentalists as well as First Nation communities in British Colombia, Canada. One of the interesting aspects of the study is how they label actors as boundary insiders (those who work for the industry or government), institutional challengers (environmentalists, First Nations groups and allies) and institutional entrepreneurs and innovating challengers (which I would describe as moderate NGOs and 'progressive' companies). This is a useful categorisation for those working at the boundary of organizations. Their research is interesting because it finds that there may be times when temporary boundaries are needed to shelter actors in order to allow them to collectively

imagine new practices and boundaries (2010; p.213). They open up ideas about actors innovating not through stepping out of their boundaries, but by establishing further boundaries. This opens up space for further research into relational space (Kellogg 2009) or free space (Gamson, 1996). If firms develop boundaries with government that are too controlled, it can result in other stakeholders engaging in activities to have influence that would be unnecessary if collaboration had been built into activity from the onset (Zeitsma and Lawrence 2010). This existing research however has tended to focus on situations where there are clear outcomes; but of course 'real life' does not work like that. People do not necessarily know if their projects will be successful or what might happen or change in the future (Weick, 2007).

2.3.2.4.5: Community engagement
Another stream of literature that considers the interaction between firms and their external environment is that which looks specifically at firm community interactions through community engagement activity (Crane 2000; Bowen et al 2010). Since Meznar and Nigh's paper (1995), literature on community engagement has begun to develop. Note that it is now less about responding to demands, and more about proactive or collaborative working.

This literature lags behind phenomenal changes in this area. As Bowen et al. (2010) point out, this is an area of research that has had some recent and timely interest, with academia lagging slightly behind this practitioner-driven phenomenon. Drivers for community engagement, sometimes termed community relations activity, are thought to be legitimacy management (Morsing, 2006), social risk management and co-development of innovative solutions to social problems (Brammer and Millington, 2004). They establish a typology of three strategies – *transactional, transitional* and *transformational* engagement (ibid). A subset of CSR literature, community engagement literature looks at a specific regional group – the local community, as apart from particular profession-communities. Bowen et al. (2010) determine three reasons why our knowledge of community relations is limited. Firstly, this is because it combines multiple fields of knowledge. Secondly, there can be a disconnect at the phenomenon level between rhetoric and reality. Thirdly, previous research has looked at specific actions and consequences and not the range of activities that take place. This is perhaps because they would not fall easily into a specific discipline, because it incorporates social policy, public policy, cultural studies, aboriginal studies and business disciplines. Another closely related area of research is bottom of the pyramid initiatives and studies. In this case, companies or initiatives may be set up to address the financial situation

or needs of the world's poorest and lead to community empowerment (Ansari et al., 2012; Hahn, 2009).

Much of the literature focuses on how community engagement can result in win-wins for both community and firms. However, others consider less positive examples of interfacing between community and industry, for example through *buffering* (Hooghiemstra 2000) *contestation* (Hardy and Philips 2004) and *monitoring* (Altria Inc 2004). Some studies have focused on community groups as a proxy for individual citizens or assumed that a community group or organization can represent a heterogeneous group without difficulty (Crane et al. 2004). Researchers are required to "get beneath the surface of community partnerships to determine the authenticity of the activities undertaken (Bowen et al 2010; Hardy and Philips 1998; and Payne and Gallon, 2004).

2.4: Conclusions: new directions in institutional theory

This review of existing literature reveals several new directions for institutional theory, but also considerable gaps in emergent theory, particular in regard to relationships between institutional work, corporate responses and field level change. However, my review of the existing literature reveals that the corporate responses to stakeholders may be influenced not only by the character of stakeholders themselves, including their level of power and influence, but also by the particular courses of action that they use to raise issues, present challenges and assert demands. Moreover, the types of stakeholder groups that have been examined in the existing literature often ignore or marginalise the importance of potentially significant stakeholder groups. In this thesis, I argue that the institutional work of communities in general, and aboriginal communities in particular, have been largely neglected in organisational and institutional theory. As a consequence, existing theory lacks insights in to the conditions under which communities can become powerful change agents within organisational fields and the multiple ways in which organisations respond this stakeholder group.

My contributions include considering community as a construct that has until recently been much neglected, the ways in which companies respond to stakeholders at the organisational and field level, and the way in which social movement actors are able to bring about public concern through a little considered logic of protest, bearing witness. My research also focuses on on-going processes and mean-making of those working at the 'coal-face' of

institutionalism (Barley 2008a; Suddaby 2010). This helps to address one of the current weaknesses of institutionalism which has been to focus on outcomes with large quantitative studies which are not able to consider the day-to-day work of institutional actors. In the next chapter I discuss my methodology and the ways in which I deployed qualitative research methods.

Chapter 3: Methodology: Philosophical Foundations and Research Design and Implementation

3.1: Introduction

In this chapter I outline the philosophical foundations of this study and the research design (methodology). I explain why a qualitative research design involving an in-depth case study was most appropriate, considering the nature of the research question posed earlier in the thesis. I then describe how I gained access to informants, conducted interviews and engaged in participant observation. Finally, I will discuss the data analysis methods used and address issues concerning generalizability, validity, reliability and ethics.

3.2: Philosophical Foundations

An empirical social science study of any discipline requires consideration of the nature of knowledge and reality. This is an important consideration because it determines how research is carried out as well as how research questions are formulated (Bryman, 2004). Some academics take a realist stance and believe that reality is external and objective, and those social phenomena are facts distinct from social actors (Bryman, 2004). This has historically been the dominant ontology within business and management schools. Realists have sought to measure and understand the world by getting as close to a 'God's eye view 'as possible (Putnam, 1999). In contrast, social constructionists take the view that everything that is considered real is socially constructed (Gergen and Gergen, 2008; p10). It is difficult to define a social constructionist perspective precisely (Burr, 1995). It is perhaps indicative of social constructionists' shared approach, which challenges the notion of an objective world and distinct categories which makes this view difficult to summarise precisely. However this study is approached from a perspective of social constructionism and takes into account both historical and cultural specificity in the creation of knowledge, and the idea that knowledge is shaped through social interaction and language (Burr, 1995).

Some consider social constructionism to be an ontological position because of its focus on reality and being (Cunliffe, 2011; Easterby-Smith et al., 2008; Morgan and Smirchich, 1980), whilst for others it is considered an epistemological concern because of its focus on

social knowledge (Bryman, 2004). To some extent this depends on whether one takes a radical or moderate (sometimes called strong or weak) approach to social constructionism (Elders-Vass, 2012). Radical social constructionism can be seen as an ontological position because it challenges realism's view that there is an independent world separate from how we think of it (Elders-Vass, 2012).These social scientists do not attempt to use the tools of physics or biology to craft studies that consider social experience (Tilly, 2004). This study has a social constructionist ontology that understands that the social world is created by those within it. Individuals experience the world as a stable reality but in fact our social meanings are temporally and relationally experienced (Cunliffe, 2011; Burr, 1995). Humans are actors, constructors and storytellers (Cunliffe, 2011). Berger and Luckman, (1966) are often considered forefathers of this perspective in institutional theory (Barley, 2008; Elders-Vass, 2012). The social world is constructed through shared experience; understanding and language (Berger and Luckman, 1966). Social facts develop through typification and especially when later generations are unable to remember time before the constructs' creation (Berger and Luckman, 1966). This does not deny that there is a physical, 'real' quality beyond human understanding. We do not simply imagine the external world but we construct the world we live in and our understanding of it. Much of this comes from childhood learning (Berger and Luckman, 1966) and allows us to avoid the type of bustling confusion experienced by babies (Gergen and Gergen, 2008).

Berger and Luckman refer to the human's "immense plasticity in its response to environmental forces at work on it" (1966; p.66). Humans do not discover knowledge but work to create it; our social, cultural and historic context and traditions also play into this construction (Gergen and Gergen, 2008; Schwandt, 2003). Our minds do not allow us to reflect the physical world directly and unmediated (Schwandt, 2003).

We cannot access the physical world without taking a step into relativism. Even when hitting a table to demonstrate reality, there is a rhetorical element caught within the act (Edwards et al, 1995). Hitting the furniture or discussing the holocaust are devices used to show that relativism is inaccurate. They remind us of brutality and physicality; a physical world that is distinct from representation or signification (Edwards et al, 1995), in other words, that there is an objective truth. There is environmental damage; there are cancer rates. This leads realists to use language like 'the fact of the matter', 'the point', 'just got it wrong' or 'the reality is'. Thus there is an element of relativism even in the strongest assertions of realism. A realist cannot avoid relativism in explaining his or her position. Our understanding of the world is mediated by language games or other means of expressing

forms of life or differing life worlds (Gergen and Gergen, 2008; Wittgenstein, 1953). Equally one cannot take an extreme relativist approach without invoking some element of the real. The world is not made up simply of talk and text, despite the natural disposition of social scientists which sways towards this form of representation, and may at times forget that there is a physical, material natural world outside of the library or office window.

It is clear that some aspects of the human, social world, such as the institution of marriage or raising children within a family unit may contain elements of realism, such as 'women carry children when pregnant', but equally our understanding of family, or marriage, or at what age a woman stops being a child, or even what makes a woman, are socially constructed and culturally sensitive. Taken to its extremes, relativism suggests a paranormal property of the human mind—that we conjure up the world in our own minds with the meanings that we make. Edwards et al. (1995) assert that the realist position is analogous to magic. It removes, or oversees the presence of the signifier and just represents the signified. Social constructionism often risks focusing on linguistic forms of expression, rather than other forms of signification, such as the embodied or visual (Clarke, 2011).

Whether you understand the world from a realist or relativist perspective determines how you conduct empirical aspects of research, present methods, and discuss results. In a realist ontology, methods resemble natural scientific inquiry where the qualities and characteristics of the researcher are largely absent and considered as detached from the social phenomena being examined. Positivist methods are detached from the researcher as much as possible in order for the research to be considered rigorous. Critics of this positivist philosophy in management studies describe it as "physics envy" (Bell and Thorpe, 2013; Thomas and Wilson, 2011). This approach asserts that knowledge is value-free and able to generate law-like theories (Bell and Thorpe, 2013). One of the strengths of social constructionism is that it does not assume that research is apolitical, disinterested, value-free and separate from "affective or embodied aspects of human experience". It is important that the researcher recognises his or her own positions and experiences and how this influences research subjects, data collection and conclusions. In contrast, positivist researchers seek to remain outsiders in their research setting and hold an etic view of research (Bell and Thorpe, 2013).

When management schools were established and management science research pursuits began, natural science traditions were followed in order to move away from management studies' vocational heritage and assert the status of management science as an academic

discipline (Clegg, 2008). It emerged as predominantly positivistic. Such an approach aims at establishing the objectivity and neutrality of the researcher, the universality and reductionism that removed contextual features of time and space and developed law-like conclusions and research findings that could be replicated (Clegg, 2008; Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). Interpretivists, such as those working from a social constructionist perspective, aimed to get close to research and to develop thick description in order to understand an organisational phenomenon and allow transferability of ideas (Lin, 1998; Geertz, 1973). As Eisenhardt states "case study theory building is a bottom-up approach such that the specifics of data produce the generalizations of theory" (1989; p.547).

In this study I endeavoured to better understand the ways in which individuals and groups create their own perceived version of reality. The activity of conducting research is not ideologically neutral for all groups of people, especially those belonging to minority groups, and this is particularly recognised by aboriginal people, who have seen research used as a way of justifying colonialism (Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Smith, 1999). Furthermore, building on the social constructionist perspective, I view reality as a dynamic experience and recognise that people change this reality as they reproduce it according to their own perspectives and interpretations of it (Fairclough, 1992).

3.3: Research design and implementation

Below I outline the research design and methods used in this study. A qualitative research design that developed an in-depth case study was most appropriate to answer the research questions and shed light on the area of study. This was done through interviewing as well as using participant observation. This chapter concludes with an account of my data analysis and how issues around generalizability, validity and reliability are addressed.

3.3.1: Case Study

3.3.1.1: A case study approach

Qualitative research in the social sciences has a long tradition and rose to prominence at the beginning of the twentieth century, with the Chicago School leading the way in making sociology and fieldwork common aspects of anthropological studies (Locke, 2003). Case studies are popular in a number of disciplines outside of management studies, including medicine, psychology and law, for their ability to generate theory and provide rich teaching

resources (David and Sutton, 2011). Within institutional theory, Selznick's (1949) work 'TVA and the Grassroots' is considered to be an early exemplar of case study; this was a detailed but single case study. The power of this type of qualitative study is that it can provide a more nuanced and contextual understanding of institutional actors (Maguire et al., 2004; Khan et al., 2007 provide examples) but it also has the ability to show how those working within the industry understand their roles and identities, even in the face of contestation.

A case study is an in-depth empirical study of a specific example, sometimes referred to as a 'unit' (David and Allen, 2011; p.165; Snow and Trom, 2002; p.147). Units could be organisations, individuals, events, programmes or communities. Case-studies often involve an element of ethnography, as the researcher enters a particular community or organisation. Approaches to case studies vary depending on which philosophical beliefs underpin them (Eisenhardt, 1989; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). The approach to the case study used for the purposes of this research follows Stake's example to consider a specific, complex, functioning and bounded unit (1995; p.2). This contrasts with Yin (1989), who is more concerned with breaking case studies down into variables and developing comparisons between case studies. Following Stake (1995), I am more concerned with developing a rich understanding from a single case study. When the researcher or others have an interest in a case in order to learn specifically about it, it is known as an intrinsic case study (Stake, 1995). An instrumental case study is when a specific unit is used to improve understanding of a particular phenomenon (Stake, 1995). My research is an instrumental case study with the intention of contributing to theory, but it may also be of interest to some who have an intrinsic interest in the empirical setting. The oil sands makes an interesting case because it is a very large emerging industry, and those working in the industry were experiencing the nascent dynamics.

3.3.1.2: Justifying a case study approach

A case study was an appropriate research design because it led to a rich understanding of a particular context. Below I briefly discuss alternative research methods that could have been used, and justify my approach. A quantitative study was less suitable because those I met would have been unlikely to have answered a questionnaire survey without having met and built trust with the researcher. It was also important to determine whether the person I was meeting had relevant expertise; this would have been far harder with a questionnaire. It was felt that this was especially the case in the wake of the Gulf of Mexico oil spill, and in the light of the public scrutiny the companies in Alberta were facing. Those I met during

interviews were keen to describe the context (as they perceived it) to an outsider; survey data would not have enabled an understanding of the regulative, cognitive and normative environment each individual experienced within the issue arena. A study could have been developed using a questionnaire to generate empirical data. Meznar and Nigh (1995) developed scales, for example, to test how companies interact with their external environment. However using such a deductive approach would not have allowed several important themes or contextual features to emerge.

Participant observation is a valuable data-gathering method. Informal conversation and observation can provide more natural encounters and frank disclosure than interviews. It also allows for opportunities to witness first-hand interactions between stakeholders and industry, for example between community members and oil company executives. This avoids idealised accounts of relations that can be given during interviews. The downside of such a strategy is that it requires trust to be developed, usually with agreements in place at senior levels between the university and a particular corporation. Such arrangements take time to develop. This type of research method would also have restricted my ability to freely meet different people from the organisational field. It may have suggested favour towards the 'host' organisation. As my connections with people in the field developed, I was invited to attend or observe meetings and public or semi-public events as a researcher. I was able to meet with people from a range of organisations as a result. It provided some of the benefits of participant observation techniques, without the drawbacks mentioned above.

Case studies are particularly good for 'casting off preconceived notions and theories' because through the process of the researcher getting close to the case situation under study, they are able to understand the perspectives and actions of those in the case (Flyvberg, 2006). As a result, researchers often revise their original assumptions. Quantitative research, which starts with breaking units of study into variables, is not able to adapt in this type of way (Flyvberg, 2006). A case study approach using interviews and observation has a number of advantages, however, because it allows for insights to be captured from a range of actors within an issue arena (Suddaby, 2010). Single case study research has long been used by others to better understand institutional dynamics (Patriotta et al., 2011; Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005) and to build theories from extreme examples (Stake, 1995; Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2003). There is an increasing move, led by those interested in institutional work, to develop case studies that offer rich insights from a range of actors in real time rather than focusing on 'big tent' institutional theory (Suddaby, 2010). Previously, large longitudinal archival databases have been favoured. Hoffman (1999) is possibly the

archetype and one of the most cited; he tracked changing institutional dynamics over multiple decades in the chemical industry. Almost all types of social science research collect data that is specific to time and place (Ragin and Becker, 1992). Case study research acknowledges this specifically and considers contexts as a critical influence on the behaviour and actions of social and economic actors (Graham, 2000).

3.3.1.2.1: Advantages of using a case study

The case study method holds several advantages over other methods which could have been applied for this research. Firstly, case studies can be used to understand and explore the complex nature of a new phenomenon or practices whereas (as mentioned previously) other methods such as surveys might lead to artificial conclusions and risk over-simplification (David and Sutton, 2011). Secondly, the case study has the ability to "preserve the multiple realities" of the social, political or economic actors studied (Stake 1995; p.12). Case studies are particularly useful for inductive theory generation because new insights can emerge without imposing assumptions on research participants. In contrast, Meznar and Nigh (1995) for example suspect that buffering and bridging constructs are not mutually exclusive and are poorly defined; but they can only suggest the need for future research because their survey results cannot provide further explanation. Thirdly, case studies may also bridge gaps in existing literature by demonstrating what theoretical constructs look like through concrete examples (Siggelkow, 2007). This in turn will develop more nuanced theoretical understandings. Of course, researchers are not blank canvases; naturally I had some preconceptions, as well as an understanding of the literature before entering the field (Siggelkow, 2007; Suddaby, 2006). I read about the region and industry, and was in contact with those working as environmentalists in the region. Reading is a particularly good first step in case study development, because it provides an overview of actors, language and conditions (Weick, 2007). A final benefit of case studies in theory building is the story element, which is likely to make research more memorable and readable (Barley, 2006; Pollock and Bono, 2013).

3.3.1.3: Selecting the case

The case was selected for its 'extreme' features as well as for pragmatic reasons. An extreme case can generate rich insights because the key theoretical points are likely to be more apparent than in a less extreme example (Flyvberg, 2006). Dynamics are more visible in an extreme case which is why such contexts are ideal for theory building (Pratt, Rockmann and Kaufmann, 2006). Consequently, the Alberta oil sands were selected for the

benefit of the information it could provide, and not because it was a random selection (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Features that made it an extreme case were threefold. Firstly the oil was being extracted in a Western, democratic and developed country. Secondly, the scale of the oil sands reserve is vast; Canada has the second largest oil reserves worldwide. Thirdly, oil sands required recent technology (developed in the last fifty years) and a high price of oil, to be economically viable. This meant that the industry was relatively nascent and 'projects' were still being applied for.

Practical matters also suggested Canada as a choice for a case study. Important considerations when picking a case study are the researcher's ability to physically access it and whether it is hospitable to inquiries (Stake 1995 p.4). I considered Nigeria as a location, but government and police have previously been hostile towards those conducting research (Rowell et al. 2005). Bearing all this in mind, I considered it important to visit an English-speaking region in which it is relatively easy and safe to travel as a lone female worker[5].

3.3.1.4: Bounded unit

In this case, the unit of study is the organisational field (David and Allen, 2011). This unit of study does not exist in isolation however. Whilst an organisational field has become the mainstay of institutional theory, few studies have conducted interviews with actors across such an arena (Zietsma and Lawrence, 2010 provide an exception). Although there are a number of particular units that could count as a case in their own right, such as the social movement actors, or particular companies or associated groups, I chose to consider the institutional field as the level of analysis. I discuss this in greater detail below. This is because it is important to understand the nature of the demands facing organisations, and not just the types of tactics individual companies seek. It also allowed me to cross questions, or triangulate information given to me by various parts of the field to see whether meanings and understandings were shared. The approach also ensured I did not give undue privilege to the educated employees working within the industry (Denzin, 2008) and recognised that there was pluralism across the field.

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[5] Interestingly, some working within the oil industry considered the democratic, safe and easy-to-travel location of Canada to be one of the factors that had led them to have international environmental attention.

3.3.2: Research Phases

I began developing my understanding of the case study through reading books written from various perspectives. As mentioned previously, it is important to read widely to understand the case from different positions (Weick, 2007). The books that I read in relation to the case (see Table 1) were written from the perspectives of multiple actors and groups within the field, including: environmental non-government organisation workers, those working for the industry, a lobbyist, a columnist and young people partaking in an environmental trip. As the Table shows, I also watched documentaries, which gave the angle of local aboriginal community members and environmentalists and outlined some of the major concerns at a local level. It was also worthwhile reflecting on what these documentaries and narratives did not feature; for example the ways in which the industry was responding or engaging with the community were absent, as were concerns from community members about accessing employment opportunities, for example. Careful reading builds richness (Weick, 2007). These rich initial descriptions helped reveal some basic discursive terrain within the field. I later appreciated that the texts presented positions that were at the extreme ends of the organisational field; polarising the situation. I also read corporate reports and publically available documents, online material, websites, blogs and other sources of information. In Canada, environmental and social assessments are also publically accessible, though communities retain rights to the data. These provided important insights into the context. The different perspectives also provided opportunities for internal comparison within the case study.

Table 1: Supplementary, case-specific secondary resources

Reference for resource	Resource medium
Levi, M.A. 2009. The Canadian Oil Sands: Energy Security versus Climate Change. Center for Geoeconomic Studies, Council Special Report No.47. New York: Council on Foreign Relations	Book
Murphy, T. 2008. Journey to the Tar Sands. Toronto: James Lorimer and Company	Book
Clarke, T. 2008. Tar Sands Showdown: Canada and the new politics of oil in an age of climate change. Toronto: James Lorimer and Company	Book
Nikiforuk, A. 2010. Tar Sands: Dirty Oil and the Future of a Continent. Vancouver: Greystone Books and David Suzuki Foundation	Book
Levant, E. 2010. Ethical Oil: The case for Canada's oil sands. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd	Book
Iwerk, L. 2010. Dirty Oil. California: Dogwoof	Documentary film
Walsh, S. 2008. H2Oil. Toronto: Loaded Films.	Documentary film
Metter, P. 2009. Petropolis. Greenpeace Canada and Dogwoof.	Documentary film
Radford, T and Thompson N. 2011. The Tipping Point: Age of the Oilsands. David Suzuki: The Nature of Things	TV documentary
Sweeny, A. 2010. Black Bonanza: Canada's Oil Sands and the Race to Secure North America's Energy Future. Toronto: Wiley	Book

3.3.2.1: Fieldwork

My fieldwork was conducted on three trips. This happened for pragmatic reasons but also allowed me to experience events and meet with different groups of people at particular points during the period, 2010-2012. Importantly, this also allowed me to note changes and to focus on different parts of the organisational field at different times. This fieldwork plan involved an initial preliminary study, a longer period of interviews with a range of people, and a follow-up visit.

Table 2: Fieldwork plan

Dates	Fieldwork phase	Purpose of the study
November 2010	1	*Preliminary meetings and interviews:* Attend and observe social movement events
March – May 2011	2	*Main interview period:* Interviews with corporate executives, government staff, industry relations staff and community members Attend and observe corporate events and government regional plan events
January 2012	3	*Follow up visit:* Additional interviews Repeat interviews for clarification and validity

3.3.2.1.1: Phase 1 - Preliminary Study: November 2010

This short research trip allowed me to meet with a number of people from the environmental community and learn about the issues facing communities and companies. I also connected with academics familiar with the field. They provided invaluable links to those in the organisational field, as well as helping me to question my pre-conceived assumptions. This research trip coincided with a phase of busy regional activity for the environmentalists and aboriginal rights campaigners and I was able to attend a number of conferences, public events and receptions. My attendance at these events, on the whole, helped me to develop trust within this community of interest. It also allowed me to witness some of the key events unfold in the 'movement's' efforts to contest the oil industry. As well as making notes in interviews and after informal conversations, I also kept detailed field notes on where I was, what I attended and what was said in lectures and other events. I also recorded who sponsored, hosted and spoke at events. Notes of this nature were made at the time, or shortly after experiences took place (Lok and de Rond, 2012). Where books were recommended or discussed, these were subsequently read. These were particularly about colonial and settler history, culture and public affairs.

The trip was based solely in Edmonton. This city is neither home to the oil sands extraction sites nor the oil company offices. Perhaps because of this, its status as the provincial capital,

and its more liberal politics around the University of Alberta, Edmonton had become the epicentre of the debate about oil sands and home to those contesting them.

This phase was designed to be a preliminary study to test how receptive social movement actors were towards meeting with me. The study differed from many other institutional theory case studies in that events were still unfolding and therefore individuals could be asked about their current practices. This means that the study lacked the benefits of a retrospective case study in which there is a 20/20 hindsight (Weick, 2007), whereby all the possibilities of the future have been reduced to one. In studying activity, rather than outcomes (Suddaby, 2010) this is even more the case. In a case study where events and activities are still unfolding, there is more richness as there are unravelling possibilities, reasoning, conclusions and results (Weick, 2007). I assumed that similar events would happen during my second visit, and more formal interviews would take place. However, by this time the social movement had changed somewhat and largely diminished, because of financial or personal changes, or dispersed because new strategies focused environmentalists on British Columbia and the USA, where new pipelines were being proposed.

3.3.2.1.2: Phase 2 - Main interview period: March to May 2011

On the second trip, I commuted between Edmonton, Fort McMurray, which is the oil town in the north of the province, and Calgary, home to most of the oil company offices in the province. I made numerous trips to Calgary for interviews. This is where the oil industry executives are mostly based. Regulators are also predominantly based in Calgary, as are moderate NGO workers. During this period of field work, which lasted three months, I lived in Alberta thanks to a Worldwide Universities Network Researcher Mobility Award. Established academics in Edmonton were willing to share their contacts with me. I found that those working for the oil industry were particularly happy to pass on contacts of other people from their company or competitors that I should interview.

3.3.2.1.3:Phase 3 - January 2012

On the third trip, I visited Alberta for two weeks. I was able to follow up with interviews I had previously not been able to conduct due to the individuals' schedules. I also re-interviewed three individuals. One worked for a think tank with close academic connections. He was able to help me clarify what I saw taking place in the social movement. Another had worked for an industry relations corporation, and was beginning to work more closely with

a Metis[6] community. The third individual worked in a regulatory position and had switched jobs, meaning that he was willing to talk openly about industry and community activity.

3.3.3: Methods

3.3.3.1: Methods for gathering case study data

A case study describes the unit of study rather than a particular set of methods. It can be developed using questionnaires, focus groups, observation and interviews, as well as document or artefact collection (David and Allen, 2011). Data was collected primarily through interviews, although I also collected data through participant observation and secondary documents. Stake (1995) suggests that data should be noninterventionist, and so data that can be gathered from archives or observation is preferable, where possible. Of course some intervention or door-opening activity is usually needed to gain access to this type of data. Opportunities for such collection may be more available than in the past because of the internet, and because of freedom of information opportunities. However, a limitation of this approach is that you do not study why or how activity is taking place but more that which is publically available - potentially only the decoupling or promotional activity of the organisation. Such a secondary research method would have suggested that there was extensive social movement activity in the region. It would also have overlooked the regulatory pressures that were driving corporate-community interactions. This would have given a different perspective on the industry.

I believe that it is possible to conduct case study research using interviews and to limit the interventions of the researcher in the field by being an active listener and using the language chosen by the participant in question. An obvious example of this within the current study was following the use of 'oil sands' or 'tar sands' depending on the terms used by the interviewees themselves. Stake (1995; p.44) writes about the need to avoid drawing attention to yourself or your work. Hence, I did not challenge perspectives of those I met— instead I adopted the position of a respectful and attentive guest.

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[6] Metis people have mixed European and indigenous heritage and are recognised aboriginal peoples in Canada.

3.3.3.2: Interviews

It is still rare for researchers to describe the process of interviewing beyond the conventions of noting the number of interviews, length of time, standardised questions and type of recording (Alvesson, 2003; Oakley, 2004). In this section I describe the interviews and experience of being an interviewer during the course of this study. Oakley considers the reporting conventions to be as they are because the interviewer follows a masculine (rather than feminist or feminine) approach to sociology and society (1981; p.117). It may instead, or additionally, come from a concern to demonstrate that qualitative research and those undertaking it, are following rational protocol and using a legitimate research 'tool'. This leads to "unreal theoretical characterisation" which doesn't match the real life experiences of researchers (Oakley, 2004; p.117). As well as privileging certain kinds of information over behind-the-scenes experience, it also creates concerns in academics that their work is substandard, and different from the glossy descriptions of interview vital statistics that appear in published work.

3.3.3.2.1: Sampling

I followed a snowball sampling method for selecting interviewees (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This is a form of non-probability, convenience sampling (Bryman, 2004). Using this sampling procedure, prospective interviewees are often targeted for their ability to generate theory (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Social and organisational studies are likely to use this type of sample in qualitative studies (Bryman, 2004).

3.3.3.2.2: Research participants

I interviewed a range of people. Below is a table outlining the interviewees who participated in the study. These took place during the second and third trips to Alberta. In the earlier phase I mostly attended events and had informal meetings with social movement actors.

Table 3: Research Participants

No.	Role	Organisation	Research phase	Recorded (R) or notes (N)	Signed (S) or Informed (I)
1	Community relations	Company A	2	R	S
2	Community relations	Company D/Consultant	2	R	S
3	Community relations	Company C	2	R	S
4	CSR	Company E	3	R	S
5	Issue management	Company B	2	R	S
6	Sustainability consultant	Company H/Previously company D	2	R	S
7	Database manager	Company X (Consultancy)	2	R	S
8	Communications	Company A	2	R	S
9	Communications and community relations	Company X (Consultancy)	2	R	S
10	Communications	Trade Association	2	N (resistant to recording) and Observation	I
11	Communications	Trade Association	2	N (resistant to recording) and	I

				Observation	
12	Community relations projects	Trade Association	2	R and Observation	S
13	Community relations projects	Trade Association	2	R and Observation	S
14	Teacher – energy literacy	Education company funded by oil industry	2	N and Observation	I
15	Teacher – energy literacy	Education company funded by oil industry	2	N and Observation	I
16	Stakeholder and Environment Manager	Company E	2	R	S
17	Stakeholder and Environment Manager	Company A	2	R	S
18	Enterprise Centre Employee	Company E	2	N	I
19	Former Chairman	Company F	2	N	S
20	Chairman	Company B	2	N	S
21	Employee	Cultural Centre	2	R/N/ and Observation	S
22	Community consultation staff	First Nation Y	2	R	S

23	Community consultation staff	Metis Community X	2	R	S
24	Employee	Regulator	2	R	S
25	Employee	Regulator	2	R	S
26	Employee	Regulator	2 and 3	R	S
27	NGO local office	NGO A	2	R	S
28	NGO local office	NGO A	2	R	S
29	NGO employee-company head quarter country	NGO A	2	R	S
30	Community Health Director	First Nation W	2	R	S
31	Community Spokesperson	First Nation Y	1	N	I
32	Community members	First Nation Y	2	Mostly N, some R	S
33	Community members	First Nation Y	2	Mostly N, some R	S
34	Community members	First Nation Y	2	Mostly N, some R	S
35	Community members	First Nation Y	2	Mostly N, some R	S
36	Local office	NGO B	1	N	I
37	Local office	NGO C	2	R	S

38	Former local office	NGO D	2	R	S
39	Think-tank	Think-tank 1	1 and 3	N and then R	I
40	Headmaster	Metis Community Z	2	R and Observation	S

Interviewees included those working for the oil industry in areas of stakeholder management, issue management, community relations, communications or environmental management. They all had direct engagement with others within the organisational field and were concerned with a variety of stakeholder engagement activities. Most people I met were middle managers with direct understanding of work being carried out. These interviewees were able to give me a broader understanding of the history, context and senior level issue management. I met two oil company chairmen and a number of consultants with in-house experience who were particularly useful because their understanding spanned companies and in some cases sectors. I also met those working for the government, those working for the regulators and those working for the industry relations corporations who liaise between the aboriginal communities. These were either First Nations[7] or Metis communities (who do not have official designation as a First Nation but are still recognised as an aboriginal group). I met those working for the professional association, either on a part-time basis being employed by an oil company, or those working full time for the association. I also met those working for two First Nations (known as bands), as well as others working and living within four of the predominately aboriginal communities in the Lower Athabasca Region. Through my attendance at industry events, and the Lower Athabasca Regional Development Plan (LARP) stakeholder (industry and public) events, I was able to hear not only the views of the oil industry, but also those working in geographically similar extractive or resource industries, such as uranium and paper. I also met with environmentalists, many of whom were working for national or international non-government organisations (NGOs), those working for regional think tanks, and those working for moderate environmental non-government organisations (eNGOs). By moderate I mean those willing to work with the

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[7] First Nations, Metis and Inuit people make up the aboriginal people of Canada. First Nations is used as a label to describe an individual or community (such as Fort McKay First Nation) and has replaced the term 'Indian' in Canada. At the end of the nineteenth century, white settlers encouraged aboriginal people in Alberta to sign treaties. These treaties designated their First Nation group (or band). The terms of these treaties are used to base current government, industry and community relations. First Nations people have experienced racism and attempts to assimilate them through government policy, and they have lower standards of living than many other communities.

industry. I interviewed forty people in total, and taped thirty six interviews. Interviews normally lasted one hour, with some much longer, or repeated. On a couple of occasions formal interviews (with the dictaphone) were shorter but involved informal conversations and observation as well.

3.3.3.2.3: Gaining access to potential interviewees

In order to meet people I attended events, wrote to those I could find online, and asked participants that I met, also known as 'seeds' (Heckathorn, 1997), for contacts they thought I should meet. Academics at the University of Alberta were particularly helpful, although not everyone had suggestions to make, and some of those who were suggested did not respond to communication. Some people were particularly helpful in referring people. I made a list of important organisations that I should meet. I also received a list of 'community activists' from an eNGO, although I found that a lot of these people did not reply or were not relevant to what I was looking for. I was largely dependent on what I could find online, and who was willing to 'open doors' to other useful participants for my study.

I started off with a sample of 'seeds', many from eNGOs, one from the oil sands industry, one from regulators and one from a consultancy that worked with oil sands and pipeline companies. Those who took a particular interest in the project from oil companies appeared to be 'outliers' (Heckathorn, 1997) in the sense that they had come forward to participate and share my email with their contacts. They were outgoing personalities and confident with their social network. They were often working on projects they considered 'progressive' and were willing to accept that the industry was experiencing perception issues. In some cases, I felt that they perhaps thought that my research might counter this.

The need for referrals limited what I could ask to some extent because I was concerned that if I annoyed someone they would not help by referring me to other interviewees. I also made efforts to appreciate individuals' perspectives, but this involved careful probing. Some of the things I wanted to know about were sensitive, and I felt I had to build trust with an individual in order to persuade them to invite people from their personal network to participate. An early interview accidently provoked slight annoyance with the interviewee because I asked a question about young aboriginal people's access to education; I think the question was interpreted as too knowing and challenging and the individual paused and changed topic, ending the interview slightly abruptly soon afterwards. Because of the

affluence of the corporate groups I met, it would not have been appropriate, or persuasive to offer a financial incentive to participate (Heckathorn, 1997). Instead individuals appeared to enjoy the opportunity to talk about their work, roles and, to some extent, passions. Because of my aim to understand the ways in which individuals perceived the world, I used a topic guide, took limited conspicuous notes in front of individuals to appear open and relaxed (whilst recording interviews) and asked questions as they arose within the flow of the individual's answers rather than in a predetermined order. Early interviews often brought up issues or circumstances that surprised me, for example desk research and time spent with social movement actors had not informed me about the regulatory consultation process that communities were bound to. Because the flow of the interview was (especially initially) determined by the interviewees, this minimised the impact of my existing knowledge and conceptions which better revealed the interviewees' meaning-making and understanding and better revealed the circumstances in the field (Barley, 1983). I also tried to avoid interrupting answers because it was often after a few moments of silence that deeper understandings or explanations of activities were shared with me.

Interviews are "performances designed to win trust" (David and Sutton, 2011). When the researcher is foreign and has not worked within the organisational field in question, conducting qualitative research is somewhat like an entrepreneur seeking funding. Appearances, use of language and connections become essential ways of developing trust quickly and gaining access.

Masking is the term traditionally used to describe people who do not provide the contacts of their friends (Hackathorn, 1997). I think this took place to some extent with community members that I met. Those willing to meet me may have had stronger feelings than those who did not and I took this into account and attempted to balance this with opportunities to meet others, for example in cultural spaces. At one opportunity to meet the community however, I benefitted from being introduced at the same time as new youth workers. It was one of their first days in the community, and we were taken on a tour of the area, and introduced to key people in the community at the same time. One individual, who was very open and communicative in the first phase of the research and facilitated community interviews in the second phase was not able to participate in an interview himself because of new work commitments to his band. He never communicated this directly but it was made clear; despite an invitation to stay in his home. Although he conducted interviews at his kitchen table and had frank informal conversations, he left the room during 'interview' times once the recorder was on and forms were signed. He was well aware of the nature of

the research and his role as a key informant and bridge between the social movement actors and the community, for me as well as others.

3.3.3.2.4: Conducting interviews

The variety of interviews that I conducted can be said to be "talk generated in research-driven encounters" (David and Allen, 2011; p.130). This was the main focus of knowledge production in my research. The type of interviews that I conducted were more "conversations with purpose" (Burgess, 1984; p.102) than talking questionnaires (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). Participants, both interviewee and interviewer, understood that it is a formal process of gathering insights and understandings outside of a normal informal conversational interaction. Aside from interview consent forms, I tried to make this a relaxed experience. Interviews are a type of shorthand for gathering data and unpicking experiences. They are likely to be made up of official discourse along with personal stories. The interviews I carried out were loosely structured and followed the concerns that the interviewee thought were relevant as they came up (Alvesson, 2003). I used desk-based research to formulate a topic guide for each particular interviewee. The internet and earlier interviews or observations were helpful in developing an understanding of individuals', teams' and companies' (or other organisations') current work and backgrounds. Some of the questions I asked were the same in every interview, for example concerning whom they represented and what roles they had. I thought it particularly important to base questions around work, at least as the starting point for the interview.

As well as an ability to formulate the right questions, I believe that a key interviewing skill is that of actively listening to the participant. We live in a celebrity interview age, and this may add to the appeal of interviews for research participants, who are already aware of the format of such encounters, thanks to popular culture, their own educations, or other encounters they have experienced with journalists or researchers. One research participant even started the interview by advising me on the benefits of paying for transcription, others anticipated formal questioning at the start of the interview and one informed me that I could raise my hand if I had questions about his 'Canadian-isms'.

Whilst neopositivist researchers may consider interviews to be a pipeline for gaining information (Holstein and Gubrium, 2007), I think they must be understood as complex social and linguistic experiences (Alvesson, 2003; p.14). Neopositivist interviewers (such as Eisenhardt, 1989 or Glaser and Strauss, 1967) maintain a quantitative emphasis on

interviewee numbers, quantities of data, detailed coding and avoiding bias (Alvesson, 2003). Romanticists focus on real conversation and researcher intervention, but risk overly influencing what the interviewee says (Alvesson, 2003). To overcome this risk, I attempted to allow interviewees to provide lengthy answers (Kvale, 1996).

Interviews, I came to realise, had additional benefits. They acted as a marker for other more ethnographic style experiences. Interviews were often opportunities to reflect on other activity that I had observed, and often linked, or triangulated with conversations or desk research that I had done prior to the interview. I was often going to see them because I thought they could shed light on a particular part of the 'story'. They also offered a space in which to formally discuss and reflect on informal talk. I often questioned interviewees on things that they had said informally, which gave us a franker conversation. This also meant I could avoid having to attribute certain beliefs to myself, and yet still bring up the issue. This was harder with people I was meeting for the first time. Sometimes I would ask the interviewee to clarify something that was said 'off tape' or ask something that I knew would later be forgotten, such as: had the activist received death threats, or did the industry executive really feel that his face might be on a dart board? Similarly, I also learnt not to switch off the recorder too soon in the interview process because often individuals had more that they wanted to tell me.

Not all interviews were equally useful. This depended not only on the relevance of the individual's knowledge but also their personalities and willingness to talk. Some interviews enabled me to make a contact which then introduced me to more useful interviewees; for example, I met an NGO worker who introduced me to someone who worked with First Nations, and someone who worked with the industry. This also revealed interesting dimensions about her work because it demonstrated her cooperation with those across the institutional field. Some interviews provided the opportunity to clarify something that I had witnessed, and get them to 'put this on record' or explain their understanding of what I had observed. In this way the interviews were very much about my own sense making. I would often ask clarifying questions or repeat what I understood they had said in order to confirm that I understood what they were saying, or what I had read.

3.3.3.2.5: Interview questions

I used a range of types of questions during interviews (David and Sutton, 2011; p.122). I asked about people's roles within organisations as warm up questions, and also to provide

background about what they did. I also wanted them to speak as specifically as possible about their own work, and not just discuss general ideas they had about the industry. Asking these questions initially allowed me to steer core questions about their work to specific tactics or activities they were involved in. This also made it easy to move toward the core themes of the research without the participant feeling that I was intrusive. I then issued prompts and probes to find out more information, as well as to encourage them to speak about other activities or experiences. Notably this was often necessary when I was meeting corporate representatives. I was keen not to ask questions that interviewees would be unable to answer properly, which is a potential weak area of qualitative interviewing (David and Sutton, 2011).

My approach was flexible, and between semi-structured and unstructured depending on the interviewee and how much planning could be undertaken beforehand. Therefore whilst I had planned questions and topic guides for the interviews, often other directions were needed because of the information that was introduced, such as on learning about the regulatory processes involved. As the research progressed, I knew more about the case study in question, and had developed a large amount of information about the dynamics of the organisational field, but I often knew less about the research participants. This is because the snowballing sampling method that I used meant that these were often people who had been referred to me, and perhaps were less visible actors within the organisational field, and therefore I could do less preparation before the interview because I knew less about their area of work. Although I did not use a formal interview schedule, themes and topic guides are a good way of planning interviews when there will be a varying degree of structure and standardization across interviews, because they help clarify what the interviewer seeks to find out from particular participants (David and Sutton, 2011). As the study progressed, this also allowed me to cross reference with participants about particular tactics or perspectives that had been explained to me. Of course this needed to be done sensitively so as not to reveal whom I had met, because confidentiality was important to interviewees.

3.3.3.2.6: Transcription

Transcription is time-consuming, laborious and potentially boring (David and Sutton, 2011). As a consequence of almost always being in public places with high levels of background noise, this was even more the case. Whilst I tried using voice recognition software, and outsourcing work (the names and companies involved were removed in this instance), nothing was as successful and accurate as listening and typing up transcripts myself; not

only for knowing the technical or geographical language specifically, but also because it provided a way of developing a true feel of what was being said and why.

3.3.3.3: Additional data gathering

3.3.3.3.1: Observation

3.3.3.3.1.1: Attending events

I attended public and industry events as much as possible whilst I was based in Alberta. Below is a table outlining the events I attended.

Table 4: Participant observation data

No.	Type of Event	Research Phase	Location
1	Meeting between First Nations leadership, elders and youth workers	2	Aboriginal community A
2	Tour of community from band employee	2	Aboriginal community A
3	Youth workers meet community members to discuss community, history, language, Residential schooling legacy	2	Aboriginal community A
4	Community meal	2	Aboriginal community A
5	Tour of school and grounds with community relations executives	2	Aboriginal community B
6	Industry-organized school event	2	Aboriginal community B
7	Welcome breakfast for corporate volunteers	2	Fort McMurray
8	Cross industry dinner - Fort McMurray	2	Fort McMurray
9	Oil Sands Discovery Centre tour	2	Fort McMurray
10	Tour of Fort McMurray and area	2	Fort McMurray
11	Industry association communication staff and industry funded educators	2	Fort McMurray
12	Public Relations lunch event - industry and regulators	2	Calgary
13	Cross industry/regulators dinner	2	Calgary
14	Presentation on consultation from CEO	2	Calgary
15	Lunch with regulators	2	Calgary
16	Discussion between oil sands truck drivers	2	Calgary
17	Aboriginal allies event – British Columbia and	1	Edmonton

	Alberta environmentalists and indigenous activists share stories and strategies		
18	LARP stakeholder meeting – cross sector and industry	2	Edmonton
19	LARP public consultation meeting	2	Edmonton
20	Court hearing oil company environmental standards	2	Edmonton
21	Protest outside court house and press interviews	2	Edmonton
22	Review and press release meeting – NGO and elders	2	Edmonton
23	Tar sands and neo-colonialism presentation	1	Edmonton
24	NGO stand at Treaty Day – First Nations chiefs	1	Edmonton
25	Dirty Oil Film showing – Panel Discussion 1	1	Edmonton
26	Dirty Oil Film showing – Panel Discussion 2	1	Edmonton
27	Launch event – environmentalists and indigenous activists/community members	1	Edmonton
28	Tar Sands 101 – Greenpeace organized university event	2	Edmonton
29	Edward Burtynsky 'Oil' art gallery showing	1	Edmonton
30	Oil and Water public debate	2	Edmonton
31	Provincial government opposition party meeting and presentation on oil sands	2	Edmonton
32	Environmental issues conference	2	Edmonton
33	Presentation: Ethical and Responsible Oil, Joe Oliver, London	N/A	London
34	Stunt in London – NGO and volunteer activists interrupt Canadian government minister presentation on Responsible and Ethical Oil Sands to present greenwash award	N/A	London
35	Review meeting and press release after high profile stunts	N/A	London

This provided an opportunity to introduce myself and arrange interviews, but also to get a deep sense of the dynamics of the organisational field, understand the public or in-group discourse and hear frank conversations between actors. Observing and attending events allowed me to learn more about the 'backroom activities' that the industry was carrying out that would not be available in public material. For example, there is significant emphasis placed on executives recording their interactions with community members, because if a new permit goes to a hearing, the industry has to demonstrate that they have tried to consult with the community to inform them of what is proposed. I would not have understood this nor pursued it if I had not attended an industry event where this was discussed using the very visual and violent metaphor of spilled blood. Observing people and attending events gave me access to 'overheard' conversations that I could not have within interviews. This allowed me to understand far more about the industry and the work going on, including conversational work, than I would otherwise have done. Observations such as these were recorded as field notes.

Attending and observing events allowed me to meet those doing reactive or minimal stakeholder work in order to meet regulatory requirements; in other words those less likely to agree to be interviewed. This was important because otherwise I could have concluded that those working for the oil sands industry all had similar environmental and social concerns. These events did not just allow me to meet people I would not have otherwise had access to, but also to learn about the concerns that individuals had. In a couple of cases, I interviewed individuals before or after observing them. I also experienced informal conversations that were at times more candid or prejudiced than interview dialogues. On the social movement side, documentaries, as well as court hearings against industry, and conference and university-organized events afforded the same opportunity to understand concerns, discourse and activities. Events in which social movement actors were planning and writing press releases and reflecting on events were particularly useful.

Spending time with people 'off duty' for example when they were eating their lunch away from their workplace or when they are having a post work drink, allowed me to learn about their identities and personal lives and values. I came to understand that this was an important part of understanding the work that people did. Although these encounters would not be directly recorded and included in the study, they greatly enriched my own understanding.

Whilst interviews are an effective and important way of learning about activities and people in a timely manner, observing, as well as attending events, allowed me to experience things that people may not have intended. I became aware, for example, of how few people were mobilized locally within the social movement, despite the international reach and projections of individuals involved. I also learnt more about corporate actors' aims and motivations as well as barriers to getting more involved with the community. These experiences also allowed me to meet community members who were positive (as well people who were negative) about the industry. Written documents often focused on portraying communities as homogenous in their support or concerns. However, I also discovered that sometimes what people told me in interviews was not necessarily acknowledged by everyone I was meeting. For example, I was sent footage of a stakeholder meeting in which some community members made very emotional and forceful speeches to the floor. I was later told that this type of action did not take place.

3.3.3.3.2: Unstructured interviews

In addition to conducting recorded interviews and observing at relevant events, I also had conversations with: Alberta Future Leaders[8], members of a band leadership and staff; academics specialising in sociology, organisation studies and energy economics; government employees working for the department of culture and community spirit; trade association staff; attendees of the LARP stakeholder meeting in Edmonton and the LARP public meeting in Edmonton; attendees of court hearings and outside courthouse protest; those attending anti tar sands information briefings and talks; those attending aboriginal ally talks including UK and Canadian-based NGO workers and attendees of film showings and question and answer events. I was able to meet with regulators and corporate executives at industry events on stakeholder relations. I also attended the presentation by Joe Oliver, Canadian Minister of Natural Resources, at the London School of Economics (November 2011, Canada: a reliable, responsible contributor to global energy security and economic stability). This event was cut short because of antagonistic questioning but I was able to speak with the environmentalists who interrupted the event.

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[8] Industry and band sponsored young people, in this case university students, from the province who work as youth workers in aboriginal communities over the summer.

3.3.3.3.3: Documentation

While the predominant method of gathering data was through conducting interviews, I also gathered public and private company and professional association documents, monitored websites and read environmental non-governmental organisation reports, press releases, and social media updates.

3.3.4: Researcher identity

The effectiveness of qualitative research hinges on the success of interactions between researcher and the phenomenon (Stake, 1995). Consequently it is important not to ignore the role of the researcher whilst remembering that writing should not become a narcissistic endeavour. Identity and appearance is an often-overlooked but notable aspect of conducting qualitative research (Ladson-Billing and Donner, 2005; Bell, 1999). It was potentially constraining and advancing at different times. I was able, because of my previous life experience, age and gender to appear non-threatening to both the environmental or corporate community. Whilst Ladson-Billing and Donner (2005) recount how a researcher was mistaken to be the cleaner, I was thought to be 'the registration girl', as well as an intern for a regulator. Whilst embarrassing, this gave me awareness of how others perceived me as a member of their in-group (albeit junior). It also meant that they continued to speak with me. This led to some of the most useful contacts.

A researcher must decide whether to present themselves as an expert on the issue studied, and how much knowledge to disclose (Stake, 1995). To some extent appearance and previous experience makes the decision for a researcher. As a relatively young student from England, it was largely decided for me. I tried to adopt an inquisitive naivety and deferential warmth with those that I met. I also found in one early interview that expressing knowledge of the social context, in this case mentioning Residential Schools, ended the interview with a consultant. After this, I was careful to enquire about subjects and to imply little prior knowledge. Those I met were not intimidated that I would challenge their world views. I felt this was important because I was interested in finding out what they felt, and what they understood to be taking place. I had never worked in the industry, and I was not Canadian, so posing as an expert-consultant would have felt forced. Only in one case did I feel that I stepped into the 'consultant' role and this was with a young man working within a consultancy. That said, having worked in a technology consultancy and attended social movement events and training in the UK enabled me to confidently interact with different

groups. I was also able to demonstrate my knowledge of events and people within the environmental movement in the UK, as well as tailoring my language.

3.4: Data analysis

This section considers grounded theory and the ways in which I analysed the data. The researcher has an effect through the process of gathering data, as well as in interpreting it (Anderson, 2008). Reflexivity within research is important (Anderson, 2008).

3.4.1: Grounded theory

I deployed a grounded theory approach to data analysis and theory generation in order to systematically analyse empirical qualitative data and develop middle-range theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Glaser and Strauss (1967) were the first to write about grounded theory. Grounded theory is consistent with a constructionist epistemology (Charmaz, 2006). This approach generates theory recognising that individuals create meanings about the world around them and acknowledges that human action and phenomena are complex. This also leads to qualitative research methods that allow for investigation *in situ.* This method was built from the work of symbolic interactionists such as Mead and Cooley, who rejected positivist epistemology (Suddaby, 2006). I used grounded theory because it allows for recognition and retention of the meanings individuals create about the world around them (Gephart, 2004). This approach is used to build theory, rather than test it, and balances creativity with a systematic approach (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; p.13). This middle ground between extremes of empiricism and relativism allows theory to be developed from participants' interpretive realities, and may account for its on-going popularity (Suddaby, 2006). It tries to compromise between reflecting the understandings of those in the field, whilst also contributing to the development of academic theory.

Grounded theory is a phrase often evoked to provide legitimacy for qualitative research methods (Suddaby, 2006). Even following Strauss and Corbin's more practically-oriented contributions, grounded theory is far from a mechanistic, formulaic technique that can be applied (Suddaby, 2006). With this in mind, I will outline below the way in which I systematically (but sensitively) analysed my data. Analysis is an interpretive and creative process.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggest that data collection and analysis should be conducted without prior knowledge of theory. This idea was revised by Strauss and Corbin (1990) and dismissed by later grounded theorists who have recognised that even if one tried to adopt this approach, everyone brings their own lenses and conceptual networks (Lakatos, 1982, Kelle, 1995). Strauss and Corbin (1998) recognise the value of reflecting on one's own personal experiences, assumptions and biases as part of a grounded theory approach. As well as reading academic papers, I also read broadly about the case, as discussed above. Active reading is an important part of developing an understanding of a case (Weick, 2007). Reading of this type can bring events to life and help with theorising. To inform my understanding of events and discourses surrounding the oil sands I read all the books I could find on oil sands, or tar sands, and also watched documentaries about the issues. These were often made with close help from environmental or aboriginal activists. This was an extremely useful first step, and helped to be able to contextualise what I was told in interviews, or heard at events.

My data analysis involved several phases. This began 'in the field' as is typical with grounded theory. I wrote extensive field notes and many short memos during the data collection phase of my research. Sometimes these were handwritten directly after experiences or interviews, particularly on the lengthy coach journeys that were necessary to meet people. I also pursued data relevant to themes that emerged during interviews or observations (Corley and Gioia, 2004). This is made possible with a snowball sampling method. The nature of conducting interviews abroad did mean that the process of collecting and analysing were somewhat separate, as analysing data and then conducting further interviews would have been extremely costly (cf. Corley and Gioia, 2004). However a third visit to Alberta did provide an opportunity to return to key informants. These individuals were somewhat peripheral to events and allowed me to reflect on my own early sense making. One was a regulator, another a researcher working for community industry relations and the third a think tank director. These interviews could be understood to be a form of participant validation and were more conversational in tone, as I discussed or sought to clarify my early understanding of the case, rather than theory.

3.4.1.1: Memos

Strauss and Corbin (1998) stress the need to develop memos for early sense making and the development of codes. These are helpful for encouraging a researcher to reflect on his or her analysis and what codes mean, as well as how they relate to each other. Memo writing is also popular with other forms of data analysis such as content analysis (Miles and

Huberman, 1984). It is also a useful technique for drawing on the totality of experience, as well as the researcher's memories, photographs, reflections and senses (Okely, 2004). In this way it can detail specifics pertaining to a code, or draw on more holistic ideas about the case as a whole. This is a type of creative emersion (Okely, 2004) that also allowed me to explore doubts I had during early coding rounds (Locke et al., 2008).

Coding began with *in vivo* or first order codes (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Van Mannen, 1979). This is particularly useful, as a key word or phrase can be especially illuminating (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Memos also allowed for the 'flip flop technique' where researchers look at a concept from a range of angles to further develop their understanding (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; p.94). This is similar to the thought experiments advocated by Weick in inductive theory building. There are a number of tools available to help develop theory. Focusing on a key word or phrase can illuminate other important meanings within a text (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; p.92). Another way of developing theory is to systematically compare data with the literature. This type of iterative comparison can bring about new ways of understanding the data.

On my return to England and following transcription, I read and re-read transcripts numerous times (Pratt, Rockmann and Kaufmann, 2006). I also listened to audio recordings to pick up on humour, nuances, and other detail. I wrote longer memos and began to write about what I had learnt from interviews, especially about ways in which groups interacted with each other, events and how they were understood by different actors, and my observations and early sense making activity. This is more typical with longitudinal research (such as Ziestma and Lawrence, 2010) but helped me to have more of an overview and combine the range of voices from different research participants. This helped me to become extremely familiar with the data and to blend different types of data. Alongside this, I also conducted open coding (Locke, 2001), by hand as well as later using NVIVO (9 and 10) software. NVIVO is a form of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS). This was useful for inductive research because it helps to organize codes and data. There is, however, no replacement for an interpreter as it cannot interpret data for a researcher. It can be particularly helpful when there is a large set of data and it allows the researcher to easily return to text, and adjust codes (Webb, 1999). It is noted that sometimes qualitative analysis software packages are used or written about to add legitimacy to qualitative research for those used to positivist, deductive research (Bell and Thorpe, 2013). This is not the case here; NVIVO was a useful organisational tool which held codes and allowed for easy revision and searching during later phases of the data analysis. There is a

danger that during the coding process, codes become detached from their wider context (Webb, 1999). NVIVO made it easy to return to the original data and its wider context, to avoid de-contextualisation and coding fetishism (Buston, 1997). I used conceptual coding using *in vivo* or first order codes (Corley and Gioia, 2004; Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Van Maanen, 1979). Numbers are only one clue to systematic patterns; as Okely puts it "people's beliefs, values and actions are not necessarily revealed by head counting" as it may take just one remark to open up an understanding of a particular group or context (Okely, 2004).

I then developed categories and themes whilst embarking on the constant comparison method (Corbin and Strauss, 1990). It became clear early on in the analysis process that community-related responses were different in nature, in terms of both levels of professionalism and aims, to other types of responses. I compiled a spreadsheet of these types of strategies. These were thus separated as a key overarching theme was 'compartmentalisation' of stakeholders. This was an iterative and creative process in which data was revisited to ensure that it was most suited to categories. I was also concerned with how such community responses related and changed over time and I found that these became deeper with time and industry collaboration. Much brainstorming took place to establish how themes related to each other (Pratt, Rockmann and Kaufmann, 2006).

Questioning played an important role in interpreting data. Asking questions of the data is advantageous to reveal different dimensions, variations and patterns and for moving data from description to abstraction (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; p.85). Some initial questions helped in the analysis process. One of these was: What tactics are used? From this it emerged that much activity was taking place at the collective (field) level and not simply at the individual firm level. Consequently, the actions of those working across organisations or outside organisations emerged as important. Furthermore, I read broadly alongside the analysing of the data, and followed streams of literature as categories and themes emerged, such as co-optation. For some time I was asking 'how has the social movement been successful in terms of publicity, and asserting there are issues of concern (environmental 'challenges') given the small numbers of activists and the lack of local mobilization, or even public support from local communities?' Reading across management, social movement literature and the data led me to realise that bearing witness was the logic of protest, rather than the logic of material damage or numbers which had been the early focus of den Hond and de Bakker (2007). This emerged from my understanding of the case as a whole and

related to interviews as well as observation at public events organised by the social movement actors.

3.5: Ethical Issues: consent and participation

3.5.1: Resisting pressure to participate

Considering the sensitive nature of the study, there were several important ethical issues that needed to be addressed during the course of the fieldwork. One of the most salient of these concerned my interactions with aboriginal communities. For example, I did not want to just 'turn up' to communities as an uninvited visitor. I was aware of how over-researched and consultation-fatigued community members were, and felt that overzealous participatory approaches would have been inappropriate. I recognised that people had the right to not participate in the research. I decided that I would always email people as an initial point of contact so that they did not feel pressured on the telephone to meet me. I tried to contact people whose stories were emerging from what I was being told so that they could share their perspectives. These people were working in the public domain. I also decided that I would first and foremost try to meet people who were working for communities. This is more straightforward with First Nations because there is an established network of leadership with an elected Chief and council. It was clear who was working for the band, for example, in Social Development, and Industry Relations Corporations; with these individuals specialising in negotiating deals between the industry and the community.

3.5.2: Anonymity

Anonymity was offered to and guaranteed for all interviewees who requested it. I thought this would be the most popular option for interviewees and that it would encourage people to meet me and to speak openly. Corporate executives were often reassured by this. They felt that they could speak openly about their work and the issues surrounding it without facing negative consequences for not sticking to their corporate message. However, those opposing the industry may have been more encouraged to meet with me and share their perspectives if they had felt that this would give them a platform on which to demonstrate their issues with the industry. Still others, working on sensitive matters for the First Nations communities ('working for the band'), were often keen to be anonymous because they were not allowed to speak publically on behalf of the band, for fear of altering their relationships with industry.

Identity was such a rich aspect of what I discovered that I have found it frustrating that this needed to be masked, particularly when individuals demonstrated boundary-spanning identities or work histories within the organisational field. I also felt that there were mixed consequences of giving people anonymity. People regularly discussed their own identities in relation to their work, but I felt at times it was not appropriate to disclose these because it would reveal them as individuals. Giving people anonymity at times felt like not holding them to their views, for example I cannot disclose which companies are doing what. I also felt that it disempowered some of the aboriginal community members that I met. For some it allowed them to 'speak out' without repercussions from industry or the First Nation band, which was a concern for some of the people that I met. For others, it felt as though I was not giving them the 'voice' that they wanted. However, guarantees of anonymity were often a precondition of access and whilst this may mask the role of different identities and their interactions within the institutional field, it did ensure that interviewees felt safe discussing their own perceptions, views and thoughts without any obligation to represent official lines. Arguably, therefore, anonymity enriched the research more than it detracted from it.

3.5.3: Consent

I thought it important that I was always overt about my research. Those participating in formal interviews were always asked to sign participant consent forms. Those I met and spoke with more informally were also always informed about my research. This was somewhat straightforward because my English accent inevitably led to questions about why I was in Alberta. Interviews took place in locations of the interviewees' choice and were carried out openly. I felt that consent forms were at times a form of 'coercion and control' (Harding, 2013). I came to think that the participant consent forms represented more of a legalistic formality than an expression of ethical concern. At times it felt invasive, and one history museum volunteer pointed out the parallels with white settlers asking aboriginal people to sign treaties. The forms did give people the opportunity to ask about my research, learn about what I was doing and reflect on whether they wished to be part of it. But, of course this was to some extent related to how they understood research itself. One man was concerned that I might turn him into a "spokesperson" for the community he had previously lived in. He signed the consent form, but barely spoke.

3.5.4: Funding

Funding was important for establishing contacts, demonstrating neutrality within the field and for geographical reasons. The longest period of time spent conducting fieldwork was funded through the Worldwide Universities Network Researcher Mobility award. The C-TIE research group, at the University of Leeds, while personal savings provided funds for the other visits. Only one interviewee asked whether the oil industry was funding the research. The funding was primarily provided to establish relationships with academics overseas, and this led to invaluable help with understanding the Albertan regulatory and cultural context, as well as supplying a number of early 'seed' interviewees. This also meant that I lived in Edmonton. This gave me a base to travel across Alberta to meet with different communities and companies, as Edmonton is situated halfway between Calgary (corporate headquarters) and Fort McMurray (the nearest town to the mines and operations and aboriginal communities).

3.6: Generalization

3.6.1: Validity

As there is not a universally agreed reality to compare research against (Bell and Thorpe, 2013), validity of social constructionist research is more challenging than in positivist research. Constructionist research is valid when it includes a sufficient range and number of perspectives (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). I met with a wide variety of people with a broad range of perspectives to ensure that the research was valid. These included key socio-political actors working for the government, regulators, aboriginal communities and other regional communities, the public (regional and national/international) and environmental NGOs. Other important actors are from the supply chain. These can be said to make up the organisational field, which is the bounded unit of this case study. Deciding on who made up the organisational field was guided by those I met and events I attended, as well as the existing theory. Those I met were asked to suggest others with relevant understanding, and using this snowball sampling strategy helped to show who was within the institutional field. At events I noted not just what was said but also who attended. I was also shown participant lists[9]. Organisational fields are arenas of conflict (Hoffman, 1999) and I intended to meet as many people from this field as possible. It is worth noting that I was limited by geography.

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[9] Sometimes it does pay to be mistaken for the registration girl.

There was an indigenous rights activist that has worked with aboriginal communities, and the writer of Ethical Oil, neither of whom are based within the province and, due to lack of time and money, I did not include them within the study. I attempted to understand the worlds of those I met as much as possible during fieldwork (Golden-Biddle and Locke, 1993). Whilst this is not commonly discussed (cf. van Maanen, 1979; Whiteman, 2010) I think it is worth noting that 'field' experiences, including the concrete jungle of Calgary, or the Irish pubs of activist life, also challenged my biases and assumptions. In this way, I have tried to remain authentic to the field setting and the array of worlds and perspectives that I encountered.

There are two major tensions when conducting case studies (Ragin, 1992; p.3-9). Both relate to the idea of the bounded unit. Firstly, there is the issue concerning whether the unit of study is natural, or has been artificially grouped by the researcher. This can be addressed by ensuring that participants recommend people to interview further, so that they facilitate the data collection and grouping of people themselves. This also revealed relevant networks within the field; this area would warrant further study. Triangulating through participant observation also helped to understand 'in-groups' and 'out-groups'. Secondly, there is the issue of whether the case study is generalizable or specific. Is it being studied because it is specific, an outlier, or because it can be generalised to other similar situations? The selection of this case was not random or chosen because it is representative (Siggelkow, 2007). Single case studies provide motivation, inspiration and illustration and research questions grounded in real-life experience are naturally interesting (Siggelkow, 2007). Single case studies cannot reassure readers with statements about significance but theory abstracted from data should be able to stand up on its own thanks to its internal logic (Siggelow, 2007).

3.6.2: Generalizability

Constructionist research can be considered generalizable when the concepts derived from this study have relevance in other settings (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). That said, many case study researchers do not consider typicality to be a crucial characteristic of a good instrumental case study. A non-typical case can help reveal things that might be overlooked in a typical case (Stake, 1995). One limitation of a single case study methodology is that it provides fewer opportunities to generalise than other comparative or correlational techniques. Instead a case study offers opportunities to focus on particularization (Stake, 1995). Whilst the ability to conduct grand generalizations might be somewhat limited from a case study, the advantage lies in an opportunity to understand different activity in detail, and in ways for which a more deductive approach would not account. For those, like Popper

(1935) who believed that no amount of inductive, case-based studies would prove a theory 'true', they can use qualitative studies as the first step towards conducting quantitative studies.

Quantitative researchers often criticise case study research for its lack of generalizability (Gummesson, 2000). Conversely, case study approaches may challenge quantitative positivist approaches that do not take into account detailed understandings of structure, process or other institutional forces at play (Norman, 1970). Furthermore Weick (2007) suggests that a case study is a relevant way to conduct research because if an event happened in one place, it is likely that it happened elsewhere. Case studies are particularly useful for inductive theory generation because a set of assumptions is not imposed onto the research participants, as they are in a deductive, survey-based study. Cases can also help fill gaps in existing literature (Siggelkow, 2007). Of course, I naturally had some preconceptions, as well as an understanding of the literature before entering the field (Siggelkow, 2007; Suddaby, 2006).

Siggelkow (2007) suggests that case studies are useful for demonstrating what theoretical constructs look like in 'real life' through concrete examples. This research goes further, in that whilst many of the tactics and strategies suggested in the seminal text by Oliver (1991) on organisational responses can be seen within the case study, the way in which this work is perceived by those working in boundary-edge roles is markedly different; for example, actors do not identify as attempting to 'manipulate' the institutional pressures on them, but to educate or proactively address issues within communities.

Academic readers tend to be more interested in the theoretical conceptualisation than in the details of a case because theory is more likely to be able to shape their own future research direction (Siggelkow, 2007). In contrast, an advantage of case study methodology is that often the story element, by which I mean the particulars, narrative or images, of the research may make it more memorable to readers (Barley, 2006).

Chapter 4: The Case Study: Alberta Oil Sands

Alberta is a land-locked province that spans from the prairies to the Rocky Mountains. The province, roughly the size of France, Luxemburg and the Netherlands combined, has a small population of 3.8 million people. Most are descendants of white European migrants. There are relatively large numbers of Eastern European descendants, a consequence of the Soviet era and earlier British/French propaganda that sought to settle this harsh landscape with people. Aboriginal communities are based around the province. There are several aboriginal communities within Lower Athabasca Region. These communities may be Metis or First Nations. They have differing cultures, histories and rights under the provincial government.

This province is home to oil sands. This substance was previously known as tar sands, a term that continues to be used by transnational environmental groups critical of the extraction of this unconventional oil. Oil sands are found underground as a combination of sand, water and clay (Oil Sands Discovery Centre, 2011). This gives it a sticky consistency (Canadian Centre for Energy Information, 2006). In mining, hot water processing is used to extract the bitumen from the sand. When *in situ* extraction is used, steam or solvents remove the bitumen (Canadian Centre for Energy Information, 2006).

The areas where the oil sands are found are Cold Lake, Peace River and the Lower Athabasca regions. Oil sands were extracted through mining first in the 'corridor' alongside the Athabasca River. The area that my study focuses on is the Lower Athabasca region, which is the most established, and the site of contestation. The deposit is very large; there are recoverable reserves of 170 billion barrels (Alberta Government, 2011). This means Canada ranks as having the second largest deposit of oil in the world after Saudi Arabia (Alberta Government, 2011). It is larger than the oil reserves of Iran, Iraq or Russia (Canadian Centre for Energy Information, 2006). The oil sands deposit covers 140,200 square kilometres (Oil Sands Developers Group, 2012). Analogies are drawn to help understand the scale of the deposit – it is variously described as the size of Florida, New York State, England or Greece (Art Gallery of Alberta, 2010; Greenpeace, 2010).

About twenty per cent of the oil sands are mineable using truck and shovel mining (Canadian Centre for Energy Information, 2006). In these areas, for example around the community of Fort McKay, a small First Nations and Metis village north of Fort McMurray,

mining has led to the removal of the boreal forest. Alberta's boreal forest covers 381,000 square kilometres (Alberta provincial government, 2011). Oil sands mining has disturbed 602 square kilometres (Alberta provincial government, 2011). Mining is visually ugly and large (issue management managers, interviews). This mining can be seen from space, or Google maps (Iwerks, 2010). The industry eschews images of it, to the extent that there are few images of what the oil sands actually look like within the Oil Sands Discovery Centre, the state-run, company-sponsored museum in Fort McMurray designed to explain the oil sands to family members and other regional visitors.

More oil is deposited deep under the ground. Between 93 and 95 per cent of oil sands is deposited up to 600 metres below ground (Clarke, 2008; p.23). Some of this oil can be removed through SAGD (*in situ*) extraction. By 2010, there were ninety one active oil sands projects and only five of them involve mining (Alberta government 2010). This is particularly the case in the southern half of the Lower Athabasca Region and around the Cold Lake area. In situ extraction is carried out by using water and energy to create steam which pushes up the bituminous substance (Oil Sands Discovery Centre, 2010). It is sometimes pitched as the cleaner, greener sister of oil sands mining because much of the forest remains intact. However more energy is used during the process. It strips out forest, which is part of the belt of boreal forest (conifer trees and ecosystem) that crosses Canada (Sierra Club Canada, 2010). *In situ* does not remove an entire forest area, but strips of forest. Concern has been raised about caribou populations because *in situ* development imbalances the ecosystem, for example by clearing 'corridors' along pipelines that allow wolves to kill more caribou (Leaton, 2010). The government's response to this has been to shoot the wolves from the air (Klinkenberg, 2013).

Oil sands offer considerable economic benefits for the whole country. Between 2000 and 2009 oil sands investment was estimated to be $102 billion (Alberta Government, 2013). Because of Alberta's oil sands, Canada is now the largest crude oil supplier to the US (Alberta Government, 2008). Supporters of the oil sands point out that it is a stable, secure energy source from a democratic country (Alberta Government, 2010; Ethical Oil, 2010). Oil has become the "cornerstone" of the Canadian economy (Clarke, 2008). Oil sands account for five per cent of greenhouse gas emissions in Canada (CAPP, 2010). However it is the industry with the fastest growing greenhouse gas emissions in Canada (Clarke, 2008).

Oil sands have been known about for thousands of years. They were first used by aboriginal people. In places it leaks out of the ground or river bank. In places the bitumen oozes out of the ground or into the riverbank, as it did long before Peter Pond, the first white man to visit

the springs of bitumen in 1778, was able to observe and write about it (Clarke, 2008). Those in favour of extracting the oil sands are quick to report that oil naturally leaks into the River Athabasca, and at other sites (Levant, 2010). Some, such as author Ezra Levant, or the Global Reputation Manager of an oil company whom I met, frame the oil sands extraction as cleaning up Mother Nature. Aboriginal people used this bituminous substance to seal canoes (Clarke, 2008).

4.1: Challengers and controversy

Detractors of the 'oil sands' termed it tar sands or dirty oil (Iwerks, 2010). Tar sands had been used as an earlier label for the bituminous substance mined in the Lower Athabasca Region. However by the late 2000s this term had was associated with those who were challenging whether oil sands should be extracted (interviews with government affairs manager, climate change manager). The oil company executives say that oil sands is the accurate term, tar describes a by-product of the coal industry. Social movement actors describe the oil sands as the most destructive project on Earth (Hatch and Price, 2008). The mining sites are described as 'toxic moonscape' and a David and Goliath battle. Nobel Prize winners have criticised the industry, as has a NASA scientist.

Challengers often see oil sands as a microcosm of environmental issues facing industrialised society at large (Clarke, 2008; p.10). The major public relations trigger event came in 2008 when 1600 ducks landed in a Syncrude tailings pond[10] and perished (Clarke, 2008). This garnered international press attention and served to demonstrate the environmental damage caused by oil sands.

In 2008 concerns about impacts on human health became public (Iwerks, 2010). This was a consequence of stakeholders leaving the official government or industry-run channels. Some of the communities in question are lake-living people, fish is a staple food of people living in the North of Alberta, as are other animals that naturally drink the water. The River

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10 A tailings pond is a lake of water and industrial refuse material. In oil sands extraction these 'ponds' contain water, silt, residual bitumen, salts and organic matter, as well as the solvents that are added to oil sands in the separation process. Tailings management is considered by the Alberta government to be one of the "most difficult environmental challenges" facing the sector. Targets have been put in place to reduce and reclaim the lakes. There are 77 square kilometres of tailings in Alberta in 2013. (Alberta, 2013).

Athabasca which runs along the mining area and north to Fort Chipewyan remains an important travel route for people without a year-round road. Local food sources are considered vital for a number of reasons. Firstly there is cultural tradition and the need to pass this on to younger generations. Secondly, traditional hunting and trapping is a livelihood for some and local delicacies are not always available to easily buy. Fourthly, the cost of food is high because the shipping costs to remote locations are higher[11]. Some of the fish, so the environmentalists and some community members say, were deformed. Images of fish with two jaws or what appeared to be tumours were circulated (Sierra Club, 2010).

Community members and environmentalists spoke at events, appeared in documentaries including one with David Suzuki (one of Canada's most prominent broadcasters and environmentalists) met with journalists and attended AGMs in Europe (see Iwerks, 2010 for examples). It was a time when a large number of projects were coming 'on line'. Those cynical of these concerns suggest that communities stressed environmental concern because by doing so they got better remuneration than by simply asking for more money. The local doctor raised concerns about cancer rates and became a spokesperson for Greenpeace and the community on these issues (Clarke, 2008; Nikiforuk, 2010). The government called his standards into question, but later dropped his charges, except for the charge of raising undue alarm.

The community sought training so they could monitor the water, a new drinking water system, and an in-depth study into health of residents. Local people felt there should be a study into water and their health issues – they felt there were higher cancer rates than would be expected. They also wished for a health centre and a permanent local doctor. Parents grew concerned about allowing their children to play outside as they once had, especially as swimming was a popular summer pastime in rural areas. The industry provided a new leisure facility. One consultant working for the industry suggested that there were other poverty-related issues causing early deaths such as smoking, obesity and diabetes. A Royal Society report found no credible evidence of contamination from the oil sands reaching Fort Chipewyan at levels expected to cause cancer (Hrudey et al., 2010). They did note that more monitoring focussing on human contamination was necessary to address concerns (Hrudey et al., 2010). Some community members continued to worry about their children's health and agonised over difficult choices such as whether to allow children to swim in the lake during summer, and whether to drink bottled water only (Ikwerk, 2010; observation, 2011). Many continued to enjoy 'traditional foods' such as duck; moose meat; caribou; fish; bison

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11 This includes the price of oil which is higher in communities close to oil sands than elsewhere in the province. This was shared with me by community members with knowing irony

despite their fears. The large community leisure centre provided by one of the oil companies was under-utilised (observation, 2011). An industry-community-funded programme provided young men from other parts of the province to act as Summer youth workers and examples of role models for young people. They were tasked with finding ways to encourage young people's uptake of facilities.

Many young adults have become interested in material culture; hip hop, cars, city life. Elders felt community was fragmenting and no longer enjoying cultural activities such as music or dancing (interview, elder Janvier, 2011). They felt sad about this (elders, Lower Athabasca region, 2011). Nowadays families watch television and live in smaller units (Community relations executive, interview, 2011). Cultural days and trips were arranged to help try to pass on aboriginal traditions to young people (Young activist, First Nations member interview, 2011). Alcohol and domestic abuse, considered a legacy of Residential Schooling, remained within communities (observation and interviews, 2011). Residential schooling, and social policies had focused on assimilating people through (sometimes forced) removal of children from their families, to live in boarding schools where they were taught, (and suffered various forms of abuse), to live as 'white people' thereby losing their 'savage' language, cultural traditions, ways of living from the land and family structures (Milloy, 1999; conversations Fort Chipewyan museum, 2011).

The oil industry has acted as another driver of societal change in these communities (Community relations executives, interviews and informal conversation, 2011). They have also brought with them hard drugs, a relatively large worker population and traffic into a previously very remote location. Parents and young people are moving to Fort McMurray or to workers' camps. This often leaves behind the elderly, those addicted or criminally convicted (who cannot get employment within the oil industry) or those who do not wish to work for the oil industry because they object to the environmental damage, as well as those who work for the 'band' (First Nation leadership and organisation) (First Nation residents, interview, 2011). Older members of the community are left to raise children, who may misbehave because of their disruptive family life (observation in school, 2011). Older people may be particularly concerned about lifestyle and cultural changes taking place. Adults who move to Fort McMurray, which is often described as Boom Town, are experiencing large pay cheques for the first time, and life in a quickly expanding but remote town that suffers from housing shortages and lack of health care and many other services (Murphy, 2008; Hrudey et al., 2010). Some live in boom and bust cycles, earning, spending

money on fast living and returning to their communities with addictions to hard drugs that the community may not have previously experienced (Nikiforuk, 2010).

The Royal Society found that reclamation is not keeping pace with the rate of land disturbance (Hrudey et al., 2010). Community members worry about leakage from tailings ponds (large lakes of chemical residue and water) leaking into the nearby Athabasca river. Community members downstream of the oil sands, in Fort Chipewyan, but also in Fort McKay, feel environmental and social issues are real and deeply worrying (Iwerks, 2010). Others, working for the industry, have expressed the view that raising concerns about your children's risk of cancer encourages large attendance at meetings and raises pressures on companies to treat those 'downstream' (rather than 'fence-line' to oil sands) as involved constituents (impacted stakeholders) experiencing the repercussions of development. This allows them to make the same demands on companies as their relatives' First Nations at nearer (fence-line) sites. I am also told that those who protested against the industry in Fort McKay did this because they were making internal political challenges and did so using the industry (community relations employee, regulator interview, 2012). One reason for this is that this community relies on oil sands entirely for the large profits they earn from their oil servicing companies.

4.2: Early corporate community activity

Initially oil sands extraction was conducted by two companies, Syncrude and Suncor. The Syncrude CEO and Chairman was a much-liked man in the province, Eric Newell, who worked closely with communities and was particularly keen to employ aboriginal people because they already lived in the region. He and his family also lived near the oil sands extraction sites before he went on to become the seventeenth Chancellor of the University of Alberta[12]. Eric Newell was given the Officer of the Order of Canada in 1999 for promoting employment and business opportunities for Aboriginal people. At the time of his retirement, the syndicate of oil companies that make up Syncrude changed direction and informed communities that they were to be less involved. This coincided with large expansion and proposed new projects.

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[12] The sixteenth Chancellor was the Chairman of Suncor.

4.3: Environmentalist Strategies

In the face of rising concern from communities in the region, and several people and local NGOs leaving formal stakeholder processes because of the dominant industry presence, Greenpeace set up an office in Edmonton, the provincial capital between Calgary, home to oil company offices and seen as the region's business capital, and Fort McMurray and the Lower Athabasca Region, home of the oil sands and Treaty Eight First Nations. Greenpeace consulted with NGOs and individuals in the region before opening this office in 2008. They aimed to put 'tar sands' on the government and public agenda so that impacts were discussed. Their message was clear and bold: "stop the tar sands". They displayed this message from one of the most iconic and visible landmarks in Edmonton, the High Level bridge which connects the university and liberal part of town with the government buildings, the Legislature, and the downtown area. This is the city home to the government and not the oil industry. This was timed to coincide with the re-opening of the legislature: the first day of the provincial government. This government had been acting as spokesperson for the industry. Other stunts included chaining themselves to Suncor operations after sailing down the Athabasca River, and dropping a banner from the iconic Calgary Tower, symbol of the Calgary Winter Olympics, in downtown Calgary (Environmentalist, interview, 2011). These stunts were picked up around the world by media sources such as by Al Jazeera, the Economist, National Geographic, the New York Post and the Guardian. Documentary makers and independent photographers also visited the province. International awareness, through campaigns and AGM targeting, coincided with the UN Climate Change Conference and related activism in Copenhagen.

This regional environmental activity was seen as a response to previous forms of interaction between environmentalists and community members and government and industry. Moderate regional environmental stakeholders felt that government channels were not helpful (Environmentalist, interview, 2011). Government organised these processes but was seen to be allowing industry its demands, and stakeholders were "fed up" and walked away completely around 2007. As a result, they were then open to trying new forms of expressing their concerns that were not constrained by government. Now they were working without these types of structure.

Around this time, the environmentalists banded together, in a loose coalition-building exercise. This was not made formal, but because they were "fighting the same beast" (26) albeit different aspects of, it they could get maximum benefit from foundation grants and

not double-up on activity. They were clearly differentiated organisational players working in different ways, from writing and publishing reports, through to direct action. There were relatively few individuals working across a number of organisations. Many of these were people from the region working for international organisations. Community members began to speak up and European tours were organized where a small number of community members acted as spokespeople on the issues. Each office had no more than a couple of individuals working for it. Although they garnered press coverage and international attention, this meant that burnout, a missed grant, or maternity leave, for example, could kill off an NGO office. There was high resource disparity between the well-resourced industry and the NGOs, who worked on shoe-strings. One individual worked for free with only accommodation provided. One international NGO regional director worked tirelessly to find extra funding in order to maintain their activity. Previously they had received money from oil companies, but since their campaign work against the industry, this had dried up. These oppositional environmentalists were well-connected with each other, as well as with other NGOs or aboriginal groups around the world. Social capital and their ability to make connections helped their campaigns become internationally known. They worked particularly with environmentalists from countries with oil company headquarters, such as the UK, Norway, France and the Netherlands.

They did not see individual companies as separate entities but targeted the industry as a whole (environmentalist, interview, 2011). They saw the regional government as responsible for regulating industry; "government had the ability to change this industry overnight" (environmentalist, interview, 2011). They also recognised that the government was highly supportive of industry, and acting as its public affairs department. They did not make specific project demands. The strategy was to call for the shutting down of industry. They wanted to raise awareness of the 'tar sands' as a whole, as well as the environmental and social issues associated with an oil-based economy, particularly to demonstrate that unconventional energy sources should be renewable. This allowed others working in the social movement arena to call for other demands, which seemed more measured as a consequence of the more extreme call for de-legitimation. The campaigns aimed at getting citizens in countries with 'home' oil companies to target these companies directly, especially through employees and during Annual General Meetings. This seemed to have been most effective in Norway, where Statoil is a nationally-owned company people are proud of. When Statoil was in court for failing environmental standards, Nordic NGO workers came over to sit in court, address the media and meet with the company (observation, 2011). An advert also appeared in a Canadian newspaper apologising on behalf of Nordic pensioners for the investment in the oil sands (observation, 2011).

Activists also targeted the finance and banking industry, especially in Canada. Oil sands projects require massive financial investment. They also targeted American consumers, such as with the 2009 documentary, Dirty Oil, which called for consumers to reduce their energy consumption. The focus of this documentary was on the US consumer market. The director was from California and about a third of it looked at the refining process in the USA, and on how US citizens are the largest consumers of gasoline in the world.

Environmentalists in Alberta also focused on making contacts and working with British Columbian (BC) aboriginal groups and activists to stop a pipeline that would run from Alberta to Kitimat, BC (observations, 2010). This pipeline was hoped to connect landlocked Alberta to the Asian market. They also focused on raising concerns about a proposed pipeline from Alberta to the Gulf of Mexico. This would allow the US to refine the oil and have easier access to their largest oil source. Campaigners also tried to discourage the European Union from classifying oil sands as clean and accepting it into the market.

There was no history of direct action in this traditionally (and currently) conservative province (Environmentalist, Think Tank employee, interviews, 2011/2012). People were shocked by these types of activities, for example young German Greenpeace activists chaining themselves to operational machinery, or direct action involving hanging banners from iconic buildings such as the Calgary Tower (Oil Company Chairman, 2011). The company reacted to this by proceeding with civil suits aimed at the individuals and not the NGO, for loss of economic opportunity (Issue Manager, 2011).

Internationally climate change was a focus of environmentalist campaigns against the oil sands, as well as environmental and indigenous health issues (Platform, 2010). They were particularly concerned about the river, traditional lands, and the health of citizens. Platform (2010) stated that if the 174 billion barrels of oil sands were used, then the world would not be able to lower atmospheric carbon to 350ppm. This is the amount climate scientists have predicted is needed to prevent the worst consequences of climate change.

The radical NGOs chose issues that resonated regionally: water, land, and indigenous rights (Environmentalist, interview, 2011). Water contamination and the marketization of water were particular campaign concerns regionally (observation, Treaty 8 Meeting, 2010). Photographs of deformed fish were often presented as an occurrence and an issue. When the 1600 ducks perished in the Syncrude tailings pond, this was presented as an example of the

toxicity of oil sands operations. Greenpeace was the one to break the news about the duck deaths, having received information from a 'tipster' (industry whistle-blower). This episode served to demonstrate issues around water pollution, tailings ponds and their proximity to the Athabasca River, the scale of mining in the province and the dangers to wildlife. It was also suggested that it represented industry irresponsibility because they did not report the deaths first. This seriously accelerated issue salience and concern about tar sands internationally.

A number of scientists appeared as speakers or providers of sound bites for the social movement. Whilst there were few people actively protesting against oil sands in the region, documentaries were able to feature a range of individuals opposed to the industry. Many of these people were different types of scientists who were able to challenge the credibility of the industry, and demonstrate the environmental issues caused by tar sands. They included: a NASA scientist James Hansen; Professor David Schindler; a University of Alberta academic and his team; an independent ecologist Kevin Timoney, and Simon Dyer of The Pembina Institute, a regional NGO/think tank which also describes scientific or wildlife issues. Neve Campbell, Hollywood actress and environmentalist, acted as a narrator for the Dirty Oil movie. When protests against the Keystone XL pipeline took place in Ottawa and Washington, several North American celebrities were present.

Activist work was based around defining and theorising what 'tar sands' are. Labels such as dirty oil, toxic and 'tar sands' (rather than oil sands) were regularly used (Nikiforuk, 2010 provides a good example). Tar Wars, Tarmaggedon, and cultural genocide are all labels attached to oil sands in documentaries, articles, and web material against oil sands to demonstrate the urgency of the situation and risk to 'the future of civilization' (Iwerk, 2009; Marsden, 2008). Tar sands have been described as 'the biggest and most destructive project in the history of mankind' (Thomas-Muller, 2010). Events took place at the university, an art gallery and an evangelical church. The community appeared quite closed and suspicious of those they considered to have connections to the industry.

Another theorising activity was to demonstrate the visual ugliness and size of the mining sites. Images, especially aerial images of tailings ponds and mining, were used extensively by those seeking to challenge the oil sands extraction. Images of mining, large trucks and barren landscapes are often shown (Walsh, 2009). Images from Edward Burtynsky are also used to show the sublime scale and ugliness of the mines. These images look other-worldly

and barren. The oft-repeated statement was that Alberta has reserves second only to Saudi Arabia making oil sands appear to be a globally significant resource. Greenhouse gases and climate change also stretch oil sands from being a regional issue, in terms of environmental damage, and decisions about extraction, to one that is of global concern.

As the region containing the oil sands is one that is rarely visited by those not from the area or working in the oil sands, environmentalists encouraged people to visit to see it for themselves. They helped facilitate two documentaries that gave oppositional community perspectives about the environmental damage and changes to traditional ways of life. Greenpeace also commissioned their own documentary, designed to show the scope and scale of the mining operations allowing people a new (aerial) perspective of the oil sands.

A national indigenous rights NGO acted as a bridge between the environmental NGOs and local communities. The international NGOs employed indigenous people, who could also act as community spokespeople in the media. At least one First Nations member was also employed discretely as a community spokesperson by an NGO. These people demonstrated local concern, even though there were no mass mobilizations regionally against the oil sands. When a community member decided to organise a healing walk, a walk that was not as confrontational as a protest or demonstration, but incorporated a cultural tradition of healing the earth, the NGO brought a photographer and conducted public relations activity for the walk so that it made international news. Communities were represented as consistently contesting oil sands and the damage caused to their traditional way of life. Discussions about employment, corporate investment or the consultation process were almost entirely absent from materials.

Part of challenging oil sands production was to stress the connections between oil sands, the damage of boreal forest, and the consequential damage to human health in local communities. This was done by demonstrating how communities are concerned about ecosystems and their own link to the natural world, either by living off it or also as those experiencing the effects of pollution. Two northern geographical communities – Fort McKay and Fort Chipewyan were presented. These hamlets contain three First Nations and Metis population also. They are presented as traditionally living off the land and trap lines, being isolated and having limited previous contact with the outside world. In Fort McKay, the First Nations chief had been an early adapter to the industry and this community were often presented as a successful story of Aboriginal business. Fort McKay residents'

attendance at a film screening of this documentary was celebrated because of the community leadership's long-term support and profit from the industry. There a mother and business woman spoke out about her tensions between running a profitable oil-sands based business, and her growing concerns about the environment, including injuries to her body.

In contrast, Fort Chipewyan was presented as more opposed because of health concerns. Community condemnation is presented through the use of spokespeople. He was identified usually as a former chief in Fort Chipewyan, sometimes as Mikisew Cree and occasionally as industry relations corporation staff member. Other community members to feature included elders who talked about how the land was in the past and how they used to live from the land before trap lines were damaged. Young people were rarely featured although they appeared briefly in the documentary Dirty Oil only as those suffering or concerned with poor health (two counted). A community meeting where community members are shown asking questions about health issues to company (Suncor) representative is the only example of collective gathering against the industry. Professional environmentalists based in Edmonton but with aboriginal identities were often spokespeople also. Community leaders are presented, although there was often an absence of those currently in position. Nikiforuk was one of the authors of the narratives against the oil sands. Others include Greenpeace Alberta professional activists.

4.4: Communities

There are a number of First Nations in the region. In this study I had contact with people from five communities in the Lower Athabasca Region. These were First Nations as well as Metis. There was also a largely white community in the town of Fort McMurray, a town made up of families that have been based in the town long-term, and new arrivals or single transient workers, many of whom live in working camps outside the town. The town was not considered as part of my study.

Changes to the environment, especially relating to health and the ability to practise traditional ways of life, were the biggest concern of community members I spoke with. Additionally, providing young people with opportunities – crucially choice – was also important, including education and employment, but not necessarily employment within the industry. It was pointed out to me that a healthy community needs people to stay within it,

as well as doctors, teachers and nurses. Those opposed to oil sands because of the threat to First Nations communities describe it as a potential cultural genocide (presentations, 2010).

There are a range of types of communities in the province and a variety of terms used to describe them and their localities. Even those working for communities can find it difficult to represent the wide range of opinions and positions on something such as the oil sands. These communities are made up of people who predominantly share a geographical space, but increasingly not everyone belonging to a First Nation near the oil sands lives nearby. Membership is established by family and birth, and not by where a person lives currently. Consequently, aboriginal communities are likely to exhibit characteristics that make them more similar to a community of interest than other geographical communities, because of shared values, identity and history.

4.4.1: Aboriginal communities in Alberta

First Nations communities are one type of aboriginal community in Canada. They consider themselves separate nations within Canada. Because their numbers are relatively small, they are often synonymous with particular geographical villages and communities. This type of community has regulatory rights from the regional and federal government. This gives them the power to negotiate and attempt to stop further development, and it also gives them a space to negotiate benefits and profit from development.

A First Nation (also known as the band) has a structure that involves a Chief and Council and other support staff, such as a Social Development Director and a CEO of any band companies. They have a democratic process of governance. Communities and their leadership will have a range of attitudes towards the industry. In order to avoid overwhelming community members with the regulatory consultation process which is highly demanding, lengthy and specialised, communities invested in consultants and employees to conduct this work. Industry Relations Corporations or Government Industry Relations departments were established for this. Their funding comes from industry. They also conduct their own research, on topics such as traditional ecological knowledge and current land use.

Companies initially considered that Metis people, without treaty rights but living in First Nations communities would gain the same development advantages as their First Nations neighbours. But a shift began to take place in 2011 when a new *in situ* development was in the process of establishing near to a majority-Metis community. This community developed

a similar governance structure to a First Nation community, with a committee to oversee oil sands development and relations, and a team of consultants to help them through the consultation process and negotiate a multimillion dollar investment over the lifetime of the project. Other Metis communities, who did not get the new housing, for example, as did their First Nations neighbours, also began to invest (as far as they could) in industry relations expertise. Some oil sands companies, especially those working in the South were willing to assert that they would treat all aboriginal communities the same, regardless of treaty rights.

I am told that there are several social barriers which stop people from working in the oil sands. These are alcohol dependency or addiction, lack of education or family situation. Social deprivation is complex, caused by historical institutional racism that took the form of public policies aimed at assimilating aboriginal people into white Canadian life, such as through Residential schooling and disenfranchisement (McCormack, 2010; Milloy, 1999). Companies talk about the government failure to address social issues in the late twentieth century. They are often critical of government's bureaucratic nature. Aboriginal campaigners and radical environmentalists talk about how treaty rights and policies at the end of the nineteenth century have had a lasting impact. Government and industry are often perceived as one and the same.

Friends of the Earth labelled communities near oil or other industrial development 'fence-line'. These are communities living with the daily changes caused by the physical presence of development and commonly thought to be impacted by oil extraction. One impact of the tar sands campaigns was that they asserted a downstream community – Fort Chipewyan – as connected. This community, made up of two First Nations, is an hour by plane from Fort McMurray. They felt development in a different way because community members could not commute to the oil sands and therefore those working for the industry were gone from their community. The creation of a 'Downstream' community is important because it asserted their importance despite their geographical distance. It connected the community because of the environmental damage, especially the waterways. The community lives at the end of the river, sitting on the Lake Athabasca. It is also well-known because despite its small size, it is generally considered the earliest Albertan community (McCormack, 2010). Also, because of its remoteness, travel by air to the village is commonplace so whilst it is far away it is also easier to reach than many other communities requiring lengthy car journeys. The lack of alternative industries, remoteness and visibility of oil sands for those flying to their community may have made this stronger. They are also significant because they

attempt to demonstrate that oil sands have a broader impact on the region's health and environment and don't merely affect close neighbours. This community, as with others, considers its traditional territory to be the 'oil sands corridor'. This is where people traditionally hunted, fished and trapped and is also home to numerous cultural and burial sites.

Another difference between communities lay in their public support for the industry. Whilst Mikisew Cree, one of the Fort Chipewyan First Nations, has business interests in the province, they tend to project a public image that is critical of the industry. This is perhaps because they wish to stop any further development. In contrast, Fort McKay, the First Nation that has made the most money from oil sands, is often described as being supportive; community businesses have been set up and personal employment opportunities have been seized.

Community relations employees tell me that other communities throughout Alberta have claimed that the oil sands region comprise their traditional territories. The links to the area might be tenuous, such as the birthplace of a grandmother in the community. It could be that they exaggerate their attachment to a place in order to benefit financially, or it could also be that wider stakeholders do not understand the wider space and traditions of the particular community. Provincial government and corporate executives were surprised when communities claimed traditional areas that were very large and overlapping. Land use disputes are said to be one reason why there is no longer an overseeing association of Albertan First Nations. Chief and Council from Treaty eight do meet regularly, however.

4.4.2: Community demands and interests

It is important to understand that there is an array of direct, indirect, passive or active pressures felt by a company in the external environment. The external environment can be said to be made up of a number of layers. There is the physical environment, which is unable to speak for itself, and becomes the battleground of a number of diverse groups of the social environment. These may be community members near the site of extraction or production. As described above there is a range of communities and dynamics. This may be because they were previously nomadic, travelling widely for traditional pursuits such as hunting fishing and trapping, or because they recognise the benefit of associating with an area that has financial benefits: "What's your traditional territory? That's going to mean money, so probably bigger is better" (Community Relations Executive). This can cause

tensions with nearer communities who say "stay out of our sandbox – no pun intended" (Community Relations Executive).

There are multiple demands from communities. They often oppose the industry and have concerns about the environmental issues associated with development. Community members may seek training to monitor the environment, especially water, to make sure that they are not experiencing pollution from the environment. They may also seek increased regulation from the government.

They also wish for financial compensation and may ask companies to use joint venture, or their band-run companies in order to bring in increased profits. These companies offer communities a "kickback" (Community Relations Executive) in exchange for support. Community leaders may want assistance with social or economic problems in their communities. The local school may look to supplement their resources with gifts from companies. Community members may seek employment opportunities, or assistance to help them gain employment within or outside the oil sands.

4.4.3: NGO work with communities

There was activity between community members and environmental groups, although this appeared to be mainly speaking at events, giving interviews for journalists or documentaries that the environmental groups facilitated, helping with concerns, documenting issues such as fish with tumours, having a stall at a Treaty event for Chief and Council. Environmentalists also supported and documented the Healing Walk organised by local people, which was not as confrontational as a protest or demonstration, but incorporated the cultural tradition of healing the earth. The NGO brought a photographer and conducted public relations activity so that the walk made international news. An NGO had funded a prominent outspoken aboriginal man. I was told, however, that one of the radical environmental groups saw consultation and corporate-community relations to be the prerogative of the communities and they appeared to know little about the collaborations between them. The justification for this was that aboriginal communities deserved autonomy.

There were some concerns from community members that white environmentalists were against them because they hunt, trap and fish. This was a legacy from previous anti-fur

activism in the province and the early work of Greenpeace (Hunter, 1979). There was work at the University of Alberta to encourage people to be 'allies' to aboriginal issues.

4.4.4: The Public

As well as international audiences, NGO activity was aimed at making regional citizens and international audiences aware of 'tar sands'. This was aimed at people directly or at the media. There was limited mobilization of populations. Their attention also focused on those living in the head quarter companies of a number of oil sands companies. It was said that everyone knew friends or family who worked for the oil sands. Consequently this was seen as one reason why the general public was ambivalent about speaking out or protesting against oil sands. However those working for the industry reported that public scrutiny took the form of media attention, but also significantly shared stories about how family, friends or acquaintances challenged their work. For these people, they may see the oil sands as a hot issue (Rao, 2009) and attempt to challenge family and friends – I was given a number of examples of grandmother, boyfriend, dinner party guest, soccer parents or barbeque acquaintance. These people are likely to be influenced by the media. The media is influenced by environmental groups who have concerns with gaining media and government attention. Their actions are focused on getting on the six o'clock news, one environmentalist describes this as 'ego' activism and states that there is limited connection to the community.

As the region containing the oil sands is one that is rarely visited, the NGO encouraged people to visit. The NGO helped facilitate two documentaries that gave community perspectives about the environmental damage and changes to traditional ways of life. They also commissioned their own documentary, which showed "the scope and scale of oil sands" (Environmentalist). This allowed people a new (aerial) perspective of the oil sands.

4.5: Conclusion

In this chapter I have summarised a complex field involving a number of prominent and contentious stakeholder groups, most notably the environmental social movement actors and the multiple and heterogeneous aboriginal communities in the Lower Athabasca Region, or oil sands corridor. This serves to give an overview of the type of actions they were involved in, and the stakeholder pressures experienced by companies extracting oil sands in the province and adds context to the thesis. It was developed using the interviews and other documentation from my three field trips. The next chapter will discuss the social movement

activity conducted by opposing local community members and environmental non-governmental organisations.

activity conducted by opposing local community members and environmental non-governmental organisations.

Chapter 5: Bearing Witness

5.1: Targeting the industry with protest logic of Bearing Witness

This chapter considers the actions of social movement actors in bringing attention to oil sands. Existing literature often describes such activist activity as 'institutional demands' (Pache and Santos, 2010). This suggests that the stakeholder groups are making particular calls for change. Instead organisations often have to interpret actions and fields that are complex and contradictory (Ansari et al., 2011; Pache and Santos, 2010). Radical environmentalists are likely to make demands that are difficult, often impossible, for an industry to respond to whilst maintaining their industry, such as shutting down.

This chapter serves to outline and explore the main opposition to the oil sands. Stakeholders worked together in order to challenge the conservative and taken-for-granted oil industry in the province. It does not follow the standard framework that we would expect for an activist group targeting a firm (den Hond and de Bakker, 2007). Instead they use an overlooked logic of protest – the logic of bearing witness – to conduct identity work to create new understanding about the oil sands (See figures 3 and 4 p.118). This can be done with relatively few actors using protests that use the logic of bearing witness. Within this chapter I discuss the range of activities undertaken by the social movement actors, as well as the identities that are projected in order to bear witness.

5.2: Social Movements and Organisations

The role of social movements, sometimes described as activists (den Hond and de Bakker, 2007) or extra-institutional actors (King, 2008) on organisations has become an area of growing interest for organisational theorists and other management scholars (Kraemer et al. 2013, Hond and de Bakker, 2007; King and Soule, 2007; Davis et al., 2008; Weber, Rao and Thomas, 2009). Social movement literature has traditionally focused its attention on social movements' attempts to change political or state-level systems of authority (Giugni 1999; Della Porta and Diani, 1999; McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly, 2001). More recently though, attention has begun to shift to the role of activists on corporations (King and Soule, 2007; Waldron, 2013). This can partly be attributed to the rise of neoliberalism and the corresponding weakening (or shrinking) of national governments as well as the increasing influence of corporations on society (Barley, 2007; Margolis and Walsh 2003). The rise of

environmentalism in Western popular culture, often considered to have started around the time of Carson's seminal Silent Spring (1962; Hoffman 1999) has also led to increased attention and challenge to the activities of large corporations, such as those in the oil industry (Hoffman and Jennings, 2011) paper industry (Zietsma and Lawrence, 2010) or chemical industry (Hoffman, 1999).

This has led to emerging academic interest on the role of social movements that organize against corporations (Soule, 1997; King and Soule, 2007). Early focus has been around the role of boycotts or 'protests' as methods of targeting companies, and the impact of these oppositional strategies to diminish profit and challenge policy or practices. Hirschman (1970) introduced the idea of voice as a strategy that is separate from exit to explain how customers or members might express dissatisfaction to management or some other authority over a particular practice, policy or output. In this way, voicing strategies are interest articulations and "political action par excellence" (Hirschman, 1970; p.16).

There has been a move in the last two decades, led by Zald and his colleagues, to understand the role of discursive aspects of social movements such as ideology and cultural framing (Zald, 2008; Zald, 2000; McCarthy and Zald, 1996). However, as yet, less direct and more discursive methods of protest that aim to convince publics and other audiences, rather than 'win' a specific goal or bring about a particular change in practice, have not been examined. This is the concern of this chapter.

This study contributes to this growing literature on the role of social movements on organisations by presenting a case study in which the social movement actors did not appeal directly to corporations. It also introduces the bearing witness logic of protest (Della Porta and Diani, 1999) to the organisation studies community. The seminal conceptual study by den Hond and de Bakker (2007) focuses on two types of logics of protest. These are the *logic of numbers* and the *logic of material damage*. The logic of bearing witness, acknowledged in a footnote, is removed by den Hond and de Bakker (2007) because they do not conceptualise it as a logic of protest in its own right within a corporate context. They think that when activists are interested in challenging corporations, the logic of bearing witness will only support the other logics (p.909, footnote 3). As a result, they extend the logic of material damage to incorporate symbolic damage and gain in order to bridge the conceptual gap left by omitting bearing witness. Symbolic forms allow for the subversion of dominant meanings and ideologies by social movement actors (Scott, 1989; Morrill, Zald

and Rao, 2003; den Hond and de Bakker, 2007). Despite this conceptual stretching, omitting the role of the logic of bearing witness as a type of protest strategy in its own right ignores important aspects of the challenge against the industry. This includes the range of tactics used, the channels used to disseminate such meaning making, the range of individuals engaged in such activity, as well as their roles within campaigns, and their aims.

It would be easy but inaccurate to define the 'dirty oil' challenge against oil sands as one of failed mass mobilization, for example. Whilst some signs were used to give the impression of mobilization, this was not taking place. This was not the aim of those involved. Nor did the social movement actors target the companies in the oil sands region (herein oil sands companies) directly. They referred to 'tar sands' and rarely mentioned company names. Only on a few occasions were activities organized that directly involved companies. There were also few attempts to protest in any great number, and when this did take place it was done so as a non-direct 'healing walk'. There were also no examples of material damage. Activists chained themselves to operational machinery, but this was symbolic in nature, and not aimed at damaging the sites. Actions of this type should be seen as non-direct and non-violent action, and not as attempts to damage property. The company sued the activists for loss of production, but not material damage[13].

Firstly I will discuss the logic of bearing witness by demonstrating how it was used by the regional social movement actors. Understanding this logic of protest is important not only for understanding who the social movement actors were; this loose coalition of environmentalists, indigenous campaigners and supporting experts. It is also important for understanding how they carried out their challenge against 'dirty oil' and why they did this. This demonstrates that the logic of bearing witness is not only a self-standing logic of protest, but also the dominant one used and therefore highly relevant for campaigns organized against corporations. This may show that the use of transnational networks brought about by international NGOs and the internet have changed the ways in which environmental and social campaigns are organised. Most existing research focuses on traditional forms of protest, the logic of numbers and the logic of material damage, such as boycotts (King and Soule, 2007; King, 2008; Weber, Rao and Thomas, 2009). Alternatively

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[13] Social movement actors did shift their attention to protesting against proposed new pipelines carrying oil sands and trying to lobby the US and EU, such as over the EU Fuel Directive, to avoid oil sands. This is outside the boundaries of the present study but may suggest that environmentalists were seeking to cause long term material damage through loss of earnings by cutting off markets and land locking oil.

some studies focus on the role of formal legal challenges (Weber, Rao and Thomas, 2009). Another form of institutional change making comes from internal representation (Pache and Santos, 2010; Rodrigeuz, Scully and Segal, 2002).

5.3: The logic of protest – numbers, material gain and bearing witness

Della Porta and Diani (1999) describe three logics of protest that reflect and lead to the form in which social movements organise to express opposition. These are the logic of numbers, the logic of material damage and the logic of bearing witness.

5.3.1: The logic of numbers

The logic of numbers (della Porta and Diani, 1999; building on the work of DeNardo, 1985) can be considered the form of protest most associated with social movements, such as the suffragettes, or the civil rights movement. This logic of protest involves types of action such as marches, petitions, or boycotts (den Hond and de Bakker, 2007; della Porta and Diani, 1999). It aims to mobilize as many people as possible in order to demonstrate a large body of opposition, often also putting pressure on the state, which needs to keep control and is able to see that the majority of people do not have the same viewpoint as parliament, or those with authority. Protests stand in for elections, and have an air of democracy about them (della Porta and Diani, 1999). These strategies have been used against governments since the time of the French Revolution. Social movement organisers must work to engage and mobilize a large body of the public or an active minority in order to gain media attention, show how those in charge have views or actions out of sync with this powerful body of individuals and thus bring about change. In a corporate situation, this is particularly powerful if the protesting group make up a critical stakeholder group on whose support the corporation depends (den Hond and de Bakker, 2007). This logic of numbers underpins 'exit' strategies (Hirschman, 1970) such as boycotts because they depend on a large number of people to affect the bottom line. The salience of the group increases based on the number of actors it manages to mobilize, and also increases the likelihood of media attention.

5.3.2: The logic of material damage

The forms of protest that fall under the logic of material damage include strike action and political violence (della Porta and Diani, 1999). Material disruption is present in most forms of protest, but violence polarises attention. In a corporate context, boycotts or other exit

strategies (Hirshman, 1970; King and Soule, 2007) that cause a loss of profits for companies may be considered material damage. One contemporary example of "political-military action" is that of the Zapatista movement in Mexico (Bob, 2005). Their New Year's Day (1994) attacks led to almost immediate national attention. This provided 'celebrity status' that non-violent protest, even of thousands of people, had been unable to generate (Bob, 2005). However this is a poor strategy for arousing support from civil society, and a large number of militia are likely to be necessary to overcome state military (Bob, 2005). Den Hond and de Bakker (2007) stretch this concept by including symbolic damage, in which activists inflict strategies that seek to damage the reputation of a corporation and attack their bottom line. This was less of a concern in this case; the primary aim was to raise awareness of the 'tar sands' as a concept and undermine assumptions that it was just another type of oil and gas.

5.3.3: The logic of bearing witness

The logic of bearing witness is a construct in its own right. It shares some similarities with the 'voice' construct (King and Soule, 2007; Hirschman, 1970). Della Porta and Diani (1999) lay out several forms of protest that can be said to fall under the logic of bearing witness. They also discuss the roles adopted within this logic. The aim of the protest is not to 'win' but to 'convince' an audience of something. This is in contrast with other forms of protest that may be keener to demonstrate dominance in order to bring about a specific change. Instead it aims to demonstrate "a strong commitment to an objective deemed vital for humanity's future" (p.178). In this way it focuses on a few select individuals, often with either expertise, and/or financial or personal risk at stake, who are able to explain why a social movement issue is critical not only for themselves as individuals but for a wider public. As a result it focuses more on narratives, or symbolic acts that express an individual's conviction and concern about an issue, for example by risking arrest, or by demonstrating emotion and integrity on an issue. However, these actions are non-violent and often involve stunts e.g. banner dropping from iconic architecture such as the Legislature Building, or the Calgary Tower[14]. Bearing witness comes from a Quaker tradition of speaking one's truth with integrity, and not idly standing by. In this way it has associations with participatory democracy (della Porta and Diani, 1999). In an era of new media, both social media, blogging and twenty-four hour news cycles and transnational movement, it has become a primary mode of protest. It focuses more on the individual, the

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[14] These are two of the most iconic buildings in the Province based in Edmonton and Calgary respectively, and tourist attractions also.

protest as performance, or an image that can be transmitted through traditional or social media.

A key feature is stressing the expertise or position of the individual, in effect his or her ability to witness or judge. This is crucial, rather than providing evidence of the support of a majority or large populous. This is a highly discursive strategy because it seeks to stress a moral message which is usually embedded within the act itself. Personal risk to the individual is another defining feature that this form takes (Della Porta and Diani, 1999). This is why actions that demonstrate personal risk, such as civil disobedience, when laws which are perceived to be unjust are broken, and non-violent direct action, such as obstructing, climbing or chaining oneself to operations or committing trespass to take photographs. Unlike material damage, violence or 'terrorism' is not part of the arsenal of actions. The forms of action are different from those typically understood as 'activism'. They involve articulating positions, and raising awareness without necessarily having a particular change they wish to bring about. This means that it is much harder to quantify such activism. Much of their activity is based around educating people with a focus on generating a convincing story, with credible characters able to demonstrate the issues. In order to do this they use a small number of key experts. Typically these have been scientists and engineers (della Porta and Diani, 1999).

In this way it is a particularly powerful form of protest when explaining a phenomenon that it is not widely known about by the intended audience or when the agenda for the social movement is to change the popular understanding of an existing, taken-for-granted institution. According to della Porta and Diani (1999) conferences and research form the basis of this activity because of the importance placed on knowledge "as the foundation of a new consciousness" (p.180). This is disseminated to wider networks using traditional and social media. Documentary materials or other audio-visual footage, such as online adverts or YouTube clips, spread the story. Stunts and other symbolic displays which combine theatre or religious activity such as prayer are also used. Because traditional media reports may be superficial, forms of protest using the logic of bearing witness serve to utilise activities that combine the underlying message (della Porta and Diani, 1999). In this way, the social movement actors are able to challenge the legitimacy of practices and institutions by crafting it as a microcosm for the state of the planet, and creating a new set of meaning about a practice (Zilber, 2002).

Whilst this logic is about symbolic damage to some degree, it is more about the individual's role in exerting what she or he believes to be true than it is about a particular outcome or making a particular demand. In this case it can be difficult to demonstrate the success of a protest that has utilised this repertoire of actions. Even words such as 'action' are somewhat inappropriate in the context of delivering a seminar or making a short film for YouTube. Bearing witness relates more to the act of expressing one's position, or testifying in one's own experience and accounting for the situation as the form of resistance, than attempts to provide an outcome. This form of personal, private resistance was recognised in Martí and Fernandez' (2013) recent study of institutional work on the Holocaust, which used this extreme example to demonstrate that even small private acts, such as washing your face, can be examples of resistance against severe oppression. The act of writing allowed victims to feel connected to history and leaves an account of experiences that served as resistance in the face of extreme pressures to remain silent (p.1209). It is wrong to assume that all those against a particular practice will resist, even in the most extreme circumstances, such as Nazi oppression and the Holocaust (Martí and Fernandez, 2013). However the logic of bearing witness provides a set of protest strategies, including even micro-actions, such as washing, or journal keeping, in the face of really extreme institutional arrangements.

Below I outline how people from aboriginal communities, along with environmental activists and other actors with useful expertise or influential positions (those who could perhaps be described as occupying cultural 'command posts' such as scientists, movie directors or celebrities) were able to raise awareness about what they deemed to be an unacceptable unconventional oil. I find that two factors are important; the type of activity carried out and the type of roles adopted.

5.4: The presence of international NGOs

Community members began to raise public concerns about the oil sands around 2004.

> *"[there was a] flurry of activity starting… yeah 2004 or so when it really started to pick up when First Nations really started to get active, visible and vocal about this stuff and [NGO A] came in" (Think Tank Director)*

It is important to note that community members from First Nations had begun to be concerned and that "action comes as a result of that and not as someone trying to pull their strings" (Think Tank Director). International NGOs established themselves in the region. However these professional environmentalists were from the province. I mention this here

because whilst they were working for international NGOs they were nonetheless local people.

> *"I came from Alberta which played a big role in them hiring me"* *(Environmentalist).*

By 2011, Ethical Oil[15] and companies began to frame these NGOs as "foreign interest groups" but in fact these organisations had Albertan (and often aboriginal) employees just as multinational oil companies based in the province were staffed with many Albertan people despite often having 'foreign' headquarters.

They formed a loose coalition made up of a combination of aboriginal campaigners and paid environmentalists, working for non-governmental organisations. In effect. there was:

> *"A lot of coalition building within groups coming together that were fighting different aspects that weren't necessarily connecting in the fighting of the same beast"* *(Environmentalist).*

They found particular areas to cover, whether the banking community, provincial government, water issues or community issues. Targeting individual companies was not part of their repertoire:

> *"The main target or the main person that the message is directed at isn't necessarily the company"* *(Environmentalist).*

There were only a small number of environmentalists working across several environmental non-government organisations. One was the most prominent in the region and focused on the government (NGO A). One focused on water issues and particularly regional audiences (NGO B). Another focused on the banking industry (NGO C). A fourth focused on aboriginal rights and environmental justice (NGO D). Another more moderate NGO worked on producing research and presenting itself as more technical solutions focused. A lot of work was done to facilitate visits from those in other countries. American environmentalists were keen to demonstrate what stood at the start of the proposed Keystone XL. The local communities were concerned about health impacts, the pace of expansion and concerns about the destruction of their traditional territories and its ecosystem. Documentaries and other opportunities to be speakers allowed the minority of individuals willing and able to speak out to have maximum impact. They were positioned as representing their community.

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[15] A public advocacy organisation for the oil sands founded by Ezra Levant, author of Ethical Oil.

They were often elders, who were described as most knowledgeable about changes to the environment because of their long lives and childhoods growing up in the bush.[16]

5.5: A minority bearing witness

In bringing 'tar sands' to international audiences, there was a large amount of work taking place by relatively few social movement actors. They worked across a range of organisations to challenge the legitimacy of oil sands. Many relied on US Foundation funding, and often only one or two were paid environmentalists working from offices in the province.

Table 5: NGOs and numbers of employees

Radical International NGO	Number of employees (paid environmentalists in the Alberta office)
NGO A	2 employees
NGO B	4 employees (one paid in kind)
NGO C	1 employee
NGO D	1 employee (often out of province)
NGO E	c. 5 employees[17]

As described above, the dominant logic of protest apparent in the campaigns against the oil sands is the logic of bearing witness (Della Porta and Diani, 2006). This is crucial also to understanding how the corporations individually and collectively responded to such social movement action. It also explains why aboriginal community members were such a crucial stakeholder group and why functions and roles developed in order to address their needs, and demands, and soften their values and behaviours towards industry.

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[16] Traditional outside living

[17] Another NGO had been involved from outside the province and focused on raising issues nationally. They had an Albertan employee working on tar sands campaigning (who was interviewed for the study). However this work had diminished. A further Think Tank was involved in tar sands related issues particularly related to royalties. This work had ceased between my first field trip in 2010 and the third in 2012. A director of the Think Tank was interviewed for this study. It is worth saying that one issue relating to such small numbers was that a whole office could shut down or be suspended, as a consequence of burn-out, maternity leave or lack of grant funds.

The social movement actors aimed for global reach, using existing environmental and indigenous rights networks and targeting specific groups overseas. They do not focus on the companies themselves. They used outsider tactics, with no desire to collaborate and allow companies to benefit from their reputation (den Hond and de Bakker, 2007). They were a few extremely hard working individuals skilled at gaining maximum attention with no mass mobilization and relatively small budgets (interview with environmentalist). A series of forms of protest associated with the logic of bearing witness was used. Specifically these were education, non-violent direct actions, and reactively responding to environmental incidents, such as a spill or duck deaths.

5.6: Types of social movement activity

5.6.1: Education and awareness

The dominant forms of protest used by social movement actors centred on education. This involved report writing, press releases for the media, web material, audio-visual materials such as short films, photography, documentaries involving aerial footage and spokespeople, stands at treaty events, lectures and conference presentations, books and book tours and panel discussions. Activities of these kinds might be less expected compared with placard waving or boycott organising.

> *"For the past four years, "Simon" has been spreading the word about the risks of tar sands oil at colleges and universities, public forums, and even at oil companies' annual meetings. He and other indigenous activists have collaborated on documentary films about the tar sands that have been shown in film festivals around the world." (Profiles from the Frontline, NGO report, 2010).*

Knowledge was seen as crucial by campaigners who set about not only presenting the oil sands critically[18], but also linking this to climate change issues and a new wave of colonialism and threat of cultural genocide for aboriginal people in the province. In the province, water was seen as a particular way of gaining attention.

> *"I think in terms of what is going to rally public support it makes much more sense to focus on contaminated water in our communities in Alberta than it does to focus on oil sands development and the pace of expansion. The reason being because so*

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[18] They would describe this as 'tar sands' but for continuity I use the term 'oil sands' in this chapter.

many people in the province see themselves as linked to the oil sands that they are very defensive about that. Whereas focusing on the water and what impact they're having on water is almost a way of bringing people in through the back door to look at oil sands issues because people do still embrace things like a love of nature, water, those things and that will draw them in. It's a good way to bring people into a discussion about oil sands without <u>starting</u> with the oil sands." (Think Tank Director)

There was little known about oil sands in the province before environmentalists began campaigning (conversation with academic). This campaign was still in the early stages of its lifecycle.

5.6.2: Non-violent direct action

Non-violent direct actions relate mostly to stunts carried out by activists, such as trespassing, chaining themselves to machinery or operational equipment, or climbing up prominent local architectural features such as a bridge or a tower. These were symbolic and aimed to capture media attention that would raise awareness of the issues as they saw them. They are part of the traditional repertoire of Greenpeace (Hunter, 1979). This took place at the mining sites of two Canadian-based companies and used volunteers from outside the region. These were good activities for making "the six o'clock news" (Issue Manager) but were less common. One company knowingly allowed environmentalists onto their site in order to avoid negative images akin to the Breton Spa images of the 1990s (Cornelissen, 2011). This prevented the generation of further publicity for the environmentalists (Company Chairman). The company took individual volunteers (mostly German youths) to court in a civil action for loss of economic opportunity, and not the NGO. Their litigation teams agreed on a strategy: they would ignore each other (Issue Manager). An environmentalist, describing a similar event, told me:

"They didn't want any arrests; they didn't want any trials or any other thing that we could leverage to make it into a story" (Environmentalist)

Social movement actors in the province also responded to environmental incidents, such as an environmental breach and court hearing. In this case, a very small protest of four people assembled with a banner. The focus was on the environmentalist that the media knew, and she directed their attention to the aboriginal elder who had travelled to act as the media focal point; describing experiences of his community and the rapid changes he had experienced (observation of protest and interview with aboriginal member). Two aboriginal environmental NGO employees were frequent speakers in this capacity, able to bridge their

identities as aboriginal people and professional spokespeople for their organisation. They were also highly political, making links with historic experiences of colonialism and their on-going concerns about cultural genocide (interview, 2011 and observations, 2010).

5.7: Roles for demonstrating expertise

Social movement literature has tended to focus on the role of framing, political opportunity structures and mobilizing contexts (McAdam and Scott, 2005). The logic of bearing witness brings to the fore a set of individuals who work together to demonstrate a range of expertise to justify their assertions. This represents an alternative set of command posts and experts (Zald and Lounsbury 2010). It may even include ordinary people who might not typically be considered holders of command posts. These individuals were able to embody a variety of expertise that was woven together to create a narrative to challenge oil sands extraction. The logic of bearing witness focuses on "knowledge as the foundation of new consciousness" which leads to a focus on professional groups such as doctors or scientists (Della Porta and Diani, 1999; p.180). Consequently the logic of bearing witness focuses on individuals and experts who can demonstrate their own moral conviction and identities as legitimate bearers of knowledge. These are not just scientists and doctors, though they do take on important roles. They are also community members, especially elders, former chiefs and those living from/with the land by practising traditional ways of life such as hunting, fishing and trapping. They also include those experiencing health issues, although they are usually presented as examples rather than as spokespeople. In this way community members, even when not acting as a mobilised collective, can be key constituents attempting to influence organisational responses (Marquis, Glynn and Davis, 2007). These roles have not previously been explored.

 In this case, there are a range of roles or identities that work together, like a constellation, to convince others and suggest moral concern. The roles are also designed to challenge the status quo. Other social movements have seen the rise of one prominent, charismatic leader. Examples include Marcos, the mysterious leader of the Zapatistas (Bob, 2005) and Ken Saro-Wiwa of the Ogoni people, whose ability to articulate passionately and mobilise his people through poetry and storytelling was critical in internationalising Shell's environmental misconduct and human rights lapses in Nigeria (Saro-Wiwa, 1995; Okonta and Douglas, 2001; Wheeler et al, 2002). Such individuals become powerful symbolic figures of a campaign but a social movement can struggle if such a passionate spokesperson

decides to follow corporate interests (Kraemer et al. 2013) or dies, as in the case of Saro-Wiwa (Rowell, Marriott and Stockman, 2005).

There are projected identities that are simple and often in caricature, although based on real people and their experiences. These individuals appear in social movement materials, especially documentaries. These are characters that demonstrate a certain type of expertise, as *eye witnesses, victims, custodians and scientists*. In books or documentaries, as well as conferences and workshops there may also be 'narrators'. These are journalists or environmentalists who tell 'the story'.

5.7.1: Eye Witnesses

Eye witnesses stress the locality of the individual to the oil sands extraction site. They act as representatives of those living in communities nearby. Legitimacy and expertise comes especially from having witnessed changes to the landscape and natural environment. For example, a 'witness' might be an elder who has experienced large changes in their lives, or a fisherman or another local person that depends on local environment for their livelihood. Their legitimacy derives from their proximity to the natural environment and their emotional attachment to it.

They serve to position the ordinary people, as described by one interviewee as 'the little people' without 'book knowledge', as able to have expertise without being an engineer or a scientist. This sentiment was summed up by a community member in a speech to provincial government, in which it was rhetorically asked, "are we no longer considered knowledgeable in our fields and life experiences?" (Community Member, speech to Lower Athabasca Regional Plan consultation group, 2011). There was an emphasis on ordinary people because they knew about the changes they were experiencing. Bearing witnesses' focus on the individual's account, rather than outcome, meant that particular corporations were not singled out. In fact, government and industrial actors were often considered one and the same.

A key eyewitness at this time was John, an aboriginal man, who was a 'Former Chief' of a First Nation. This gave him legitimacy as the representative of his community (although of course he was no longer elected and so did not necessarily share the same views as others in his community). He travelled to AGMs, and to the London Climate Camp in 2009 which was known as the 'dirty oil' tour. He was working as the Industrial Relations Coordinator

for his First Nation at the time. He insists that he used his holiday and free time to campaign against the industry. But the industry provides the money for such positions within the band. It has been reported that a corporate executive of one of the major oil companies travelled to the First Nation community and told the band's chief and council that they must silence this man or suffer the consequences. He refused, and shortly after a subcontractor to the industry did not have its contract renewed. He resigned from his position and continued to be a critic of the industry. In 2010 he was funded by an eNGO in Alberta. He spent a lot of time organising the tour of the Avatar director James Cameron, a former engineer who had made a movie about how a magic indigenous people's home forest was under threat. Sierra Club Prairie Chapter had handed out pamphlets outside movie theatres in the province. These pamphlets stressed the parallels with the oil sands. This provided a ready-made set of emotional frames around indigenous lifestyles.

Eye witnesses speak up despite personal risk. Another example of a type of eye witness is one with strong financial ties to the industry. Whilst community, business and financial interests were left out of discussions about community experiences by environmentalists, those who were known to come from the particularly pro-business communities may have had more impact as witnesses than others, because they had most to lose. Those with strong financial ties to the industry actually make for strong witness bearers because they demonstrate that they are not entirely opposed to working with the industry under certain circumstances. They also show that they do not have fundamental ideological differences that cause them to protest, which means they are able to demonstrate their neutrality. This was the case with one community member who spoke out at a panel discussion about her experiences of environmental degradation. In this case she claimed that there was an unlicensed tailings pond where she walked her dogs and conducted traditional activities on the land. She owned a successful oil sands service business and her husband was prominent in community politics. She showed the rash she (and her dogs) had developed from walking through this muskeg[19] and explained that this had driven her to speak out in public. She went on to speak with journalists and gained news coverage.[20]

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[19] A type of marshland or bog common in boreal areas in the Lower Athabasca Region

[20] I am told by a regulator that in fact the tailings pond had been approved.

5.7.2: Victims

Victims can be community members, and may be local people whose livelihoods are now impacted by the oil sands extraction, such as the fisherman that declares he can no longer fish because it is neither safe nor sellable because of people's concerns.

"My people are dying" (Community Member appearing in NGO report, 2010).

Other victims within the bearing witness logic were the ducks, nearly two thousands of whom landed on a Syncrude tailings pond shortly after Greenpeace established an office in Alberta. A tailings pond is a large man-made lake of waste water, oil, chemicals and other by-products of oil sands mining. A tipster (or whistle-blower) is an example of an eye witness with high personal risk involved in reporting an issue because of his or her work. The tipster also serves to demonstrate a lack of transparency because the company did not announce there was a problem until the individual got in touch with Greenpeace. The incident was used as an example of the environmental damage, and risks to nature, and a well-timed opportunity for negative and graphic images of mining sites, tailings ponds and ducks covered in oil, resembling the familiar image of birds in an oil slick. The ducks themselves were an ideal victim for the social movement because they, naturally, had no connections with the oil industry and they did act to show the scale of tailings ponds and negative images of the oil sands mining and its 'deadly' potential impacts on nature. In a sense, this uses the logic of numbers within the bearing witness logic of protest because of the large numbers of affected wildlife. Whilst this may not be the same as a protest or march, it did serve to demonstrate problems that the social movement actors were seeking to highlight, as well as combining a large number of blameless victims. Because this was a trigger event which sparked a sense of increased risk and urgency (Lee and Lounsbury, 2010) it also meant that the media were quick to pick up on this case, and this in turn highlighted other concerns. Defining characteristics of this role are being the recipient of damage, in this case ill-health, increased risk or death.

5.7.3: Custodians

Community members appeared alongside environmental activists and scientists. Former Chiefs or elders were often spokespeople for First Nations. This may be because those in Chief and Council (leadership) have business relations and agreements with companies and this makes it difficult for them to speak with journalists or appear to be contesting the industry. This emerged when I requested interviews. Those who were previous leaders still appear to represent their community and appear as charismatic leaders. They also tend to be older people who may have more time to spend campaigning. For the most part their presence did not contradict First Nation negotiations with companies because it asserted

treaty rights and raised concerns about the environment, and companies were not named directly.

These people act as custodians for the movement. They foreground the issue of local people's connections to the environment and demonstrate that their relationship to the natural environment is deeper than a 'not in my backyard' campaigner (Rootes, 2004). They link aboriginal people and their environment through history, culture, economics and spirituality. I do not wish to suggest that this is simply enacted. A government employee interviewee showed me a map of First Nation spiritual and burial sites which run along the Athabasca River, and therefore the oil sands mining sites.

Local people contesting the oil sands were seeking for things to remain as they had done; to continue to live from their traditional territories and enjoy traditional foods, for their children to swim without health worries in the lake on a summer's day.

> *"They ruin our air, our water, pretty much everything else, our animals, our berries, that's what we used to live on, the fish, we can't, there's no more. We can't eat fish…People are getting sick from pollution". (Elder, interview in documentary).*

This conservative stance meant that local aboriginal campaigners acted as custodians wishing to preserve their local institutional practices and ways of life (Dacin and Dacin, 2008). A custodian is someone who has a strong awareness of the past but also acts as an exemplar or practitioner of a given tradition (Soares, 1997). Aboriginal people were often filmed outside, at their cabins or pursuing traditional activities, for example. Elders often recalled how things were, such as growing up in the bush. This related to living with the land, environmental stewardship and traditional ecological knowledge, as well as collective memories of the abuses of Residential Schooling and challenges to treaty rights. In this way they were clearly asserting their own history. This is something not commonly taught in Canadian schools. It contrasts with the aboriginal campaigners' more radical framing of industrial development as representing a continuation of cultural genocide and colonialism, and the oil sands executives insistence on the present and future, with minimal acknowledgement of the past, except references to rapid development, government's failure to empower communities, or personal assertions that they are relatively new 'to this'. This means that custodians have access to a resource warehouse – the past is said to provide values and solutions. Therefore those that can represent or speak as practitioners of traditional aboriginal ways of life, such as hunting, fishing and trapping, act as custodians.

For these people, their treaty rights (embodied in an ambiguous agreement signed by largely illiterate ancestors before the start of the twentieth century) were being violated by industrial development and its consequences (animal numbers and pollution) encroaching on their traditional practices. It is important to state that custodians are not historians recollecting the past, but those mindfully managing and creating traditions to ensure their present and future prospects (Soares, 1997; Dacin and Dacin 2008). Future orientation was asserted through a proverb (IRC leaflet and observation, 2011) that decisions must take into account the next seven generations. Reference was made to young people and concerns that they should have choice.

These custodians are presented as current practitioners of traditional ecological knowledge. This way of life was often discussed as a past practice of aboriginal people or as something that only elders continue to carry out by those working for oil sands companies (Community Relations Manager). Whilst traditional ecological knowledge was being recorded, it was done so for reclamation or posterity.

5.7.3.1: Demonstrating local resistance

The presence of local community members, especially elders and leaders, demonstrates that the environmentalists are not imposing their global interests in climate change to a local example, but responding to a local problem. This is important for the integrity of the social movement against oil sands. Those working as environmentalists were keen to stress that initial concerns were raised by community members.

The presence of former Chiefs and Elders in 'custodian' roles also fits into a broader movement for environmentalists to introduce environmental justice field frames and ideas around living with the environment, instead of taking from the natural environment (interview with environmentalist). Aboriginal environmentalists described public ignorance about their heritage, such as being mistaken for Korean instead of Cree, by mainstream Canadians (talk at conference event, 2011) and on-going colonialism and cultural genocide (Indigenous Allies, lecture, 2011). They presented a more radical and political stance against industrial development and also acted as bridges between local and international aspects of the campaign.

A rare example of a 'demonstration' was the healing walk that was organised by a small number of community members along with publicity support from Greenpeace, which

gained coverage in European newspapers. It has since become an annual event for those wishing to focus on healing the land rather than challenging oil companies. Whilst this represents a form of protest related to the logic of numbers, it is not its purpose. The event is non-confrontational, to encourage those with family or band ties to the industry. It represents an opportunity to assert aboriginal spiritual and cultural connection with the environment and as a site for the promotion of individuals' concerns and identities. In this way, the demonstration frames local people as custodians of the land.

5.7.4: Scientific experts

Scientists and doctors are important because they are credible witnesses on account on their scientific backgrounds, and because campaigns based on the logic of bearing witness aim to change understanding through knowledge and education (della Porta and Diani, 1999). Scientists' creation of new knowledge make them powerful social movement actors. Their work and subsequent knowledge are also assumed to be above politics. Scientists have played a role in past social movements, such as the Union of Concerned Scientists, a formal profession association of engineers and physicists that formed to challenge nuclear energy (Campbell, 2005).

A small number of crucial scientists worked with environmentalists and made up witnesses for the social movement. These included a former NASA scientist, a doctor, a senior professor of ecology and an independent ecologist. They conducted research or discussed observations from patients (in the case of the doctor). The doctor and the professor acted as advisors to the community and international spokespeople at events and therefore I discuss their roles in more detail below.

5.7.4.1: The doctor

The family practitioner of an aboriginal community raised alarm about what he perceived to be high rates of cancer and other conditions in the community. This was featured by environmentalists, in documentaries and in books. He spoke at events and toured with the social movement actors. He acted as a witness with professional and personal expertise on cancers. His soft-spoken manner and nerves did not make him an obvious personality for public speaking. However, as the only community doctor, he had unparalleled legitimacy to speak about community health. This was combined with a wider rhetoric about how aboriginal people live and eat from the land, and on-going pollution and disease in animals. As a doctor not from the community, he was able to demonstrate *neutrality* and *proximity*; a

rare but useful combination. Consequently he was positioned amongst a wider story, and his role was as *expert* and *witness*. This legitimacy was challenged by Alberta Health, and later by Ezra Levant who wrote a particularly personal and scathing attack on his integrity (2010). The social movement actors incorporated these actions into their narrative. This served to demonstrate that those who challenged the status quo were risking their livelihoods and were under attack from the 'establishment'. It also demonstrated personal risk, adding weight to a David versus Goliath story (Yaziji and Doh 2013; Esteva and Prakash, 1998) that is popular within social movements, especially protest forms using the logic of bearing witness (Tsoukas, 1999). Those that felt government and industry were 'in bed together' (Environmentalist) felt this demonstrated the point. Also, this negative consequence served to demonstrate the strength of his conviction because he was willing to put his career on the line for the sake of raising concerns. Whilst the Royal Society report suggested that there were no major issues with cancer, the heavy response of the Alberta Health board was to suggest that the doctor had doubled billed and falsified data. But reports of this kind were framed by activists as a way of attacking his character and his expertise (see Iwerks, 2010).

5.7.4.2: The academic

The professor of ecology conducted a study with his research team. He was also not the first-named author on the peer-reviewed paper. However his experience at having changed policy and corporate practice with his previous research made him an ideal speaker for the movement. His research was peer-reviewed and conducted within an established university. Universities are often considered to be politically neutral spaces (cf. Barley 2008b). A professor of science is highly credible. This also contrasted with the head of engineering, whose school and research were highly connected and supportive of the oil sands. This individual featured in adverts for the trade association. In contrast, the professor of ecology's research demonstrated that carcinogens were found in the region. This contrasted with government and industry.

> *"So that really kind of was the first peer reviewed evidence that suggests, ok the oil sands are having an impact on water quality. Meanwhile government's in denial, saying our regional aquatics monitoring program is perfectly fine as... it's perfectly functional and it's telling us there's no pollution signal, so you're wrong. And our position was well, one's peer-reviewed in a prestigious journal, one's not... and has been critiqued by independent scientists" (Environmentalist)*

He became a prominent 'witness' after the credibility of the family practitioner was challenged. This coincided with the research group's peer-reviewed paper being published. His work also led government to review their processes.

Scientists' identities are as legitimate experts, especially on biological matters. In this way they can become powerful advocates for an issue. They are part of the establishment; they take up important command posts (Zald and Lounsbury 2010) and make up expert systems that the public are likely to trust (Barley, 2008; Giddens, 1990). This is how one consultant described the scientist:

> Interviewee: "...then you have experts who have also marginalised themselves because the advocacy that they have undertaken is not helping their case. Like David Schindler. Brilliant scientist, highly regarded scientist. But I've been fortunate enough to work over the last few months to work with some really influential scientists. But they don't like him anymore. They respect his point. They totally disrespect what he's done and where he's going with the information."
>
> Charlotte: "What do you mean by that?"
>
> Interviewee: "Well he's now become an advocate and really really stomped his feet and his fists instead of letting his science speak, and rallying people around the science. [...] But he's lost, maybe it's because he's getting older and I hate to say that, but he's highly respected by some folks in the North, which is a great thing but when you lose the respect, or become marginalised by the decision makers, that is not a good thing. That's unfortunate. From a stakeholder perspective, he's marginalising himself from stakeholders who really count." (Consultant)

Their expertise is established in society, including by those working for the oil sands industry. This leads to much greater criticism, such as from this consultant. This consultant felt that the stakeholders that really count were government. As a result they are powerful expert witnesses. They are also positioned as personal, dedicated and close to those living near the oil sands.

5.8: Understanding the environmental mechanisms that lead to the logic of bearing witness

5.8.1: Barriers to protest

Conditions, sometimes called political opportunity structures or environmental mechanisms in the social movement literature, not only trigger social movements but also lead to particular constraints on how they can challenge the status quo (McAdam et al, 1996; Campbell, 2005). In this case, international NGOs were said to have moved to the province when community members and local environmentalists felt that the formal institutional channels were wasting their time, carrying out phantom mitigation and dominated by company representatives (interviews with international NGO employee; moderate environmental NGO employee). Conditions were also such that forms of protest using the logic of numbers were unlikely to develop. People living in the Lower Athabasca Region had limited employment opportunities outside of the oil sands and their related services. Consequently oil sands companies and related services were large employers of people, who may or may not have supported the industry. As a result of employment and investment and agreements signed by community leadership for communities, it was perceived as difficult for community members to speak out against the industry. Companies had established themselves within the region.

5.8.1.1: Geographical barrier to demonstrating

Cold weather for much of the year in Alberta, and dispersed First Nations across a large province, were given as explanations for why mass demonstrations were not popular (First Nations Environmentalist, 2010). I was also told that there was a lack of history of protest in the region, and that First Nations people were keen to seek non-confrontational forms of protest.

5.8.1.2: Concern about company relations

When I questioned campaigners about why more people were not protesting, I was told this was because of lack of job options that meant many people felt there was no choice but to work for the industry. A story of intimidation was told to me by several environmentalists and aboriginal people. A First Nations band were told by a representative of an oil company (in some accounts it was the CEO) to 'tame' an outspoken member of their industry relations corporation who had toured with environmentalists around Europe to internationalise the concerns of his community. They were told that if they did not silence him, or fire him, the community would suffer consequences. The band said they would not

be bullied in this way. The individual decided to leave his job in order to continue his campaign work. He moved to Edmonton and worked alongside environmentalists. In the meantime, more than sixty people in the community lost their jobs when a contract was not renewed by the company. The individual considered this a punishment. This story was widely repeated to me by environmentalists and aboriginal people. He later spoke about this to the press. This story does not make sense in the context of trying to mobilize people because it was concerning, and discouraged others from speaking out for fear of further repercussions. It also demonstrates how connected communities are to the industry through the leadership and through contracts or direct employment. However, under the logic of bearing witness it gives weight to the issues because it demonstrates the strength of concern felt by the individual, and also shows personal risk because he jeopardises his career and risked the livelihoods of community members.

5.8.2: Public characteristics

There are various reasons why logic of numbers would not have been appropriate. Below I outline the reasons.

5.8.2.1: Tradition of protest

To some extent this relates to politics. The province has remained under conservative rule for generations. There are enclaves of liberal politics around the University of Alberta, close to where the radical environmentalists were based, and there are some anti-capitalistic perspectives amongst the First Nations communities. The province as a whole is characterised by political conservatism (Takach, 2007).

5.8.2.2: Professional activists

There were only a few environmentalists being paid to work in the region. One activist I met suggested that there was an assumption that because some people were paid to work on the environmental issues, others did not need to demonstrate (interview with environmentalist). She felt the prominence of macho-style, non-direct action stunts and the lead Greenpeace environmentalist made this more alienating for individuals. This was only suggested by one individual. That said, there were real or perceived barriers to engaging with the social movement actors. This was because many people had past work lives or family connections that were contradictory to challenging the oil sands. I was told "you can't not know someone who works in the industry" (Think Tank Director). One environmentalist had previously worked as an extremely well-paid oil sands operator, and he was initially treated

with suspicion by the social movement community. Another environmentalist was shunned by her family.

5.8.3: Contextual conditions

The logic of bearing witness is a particularly successful form of protest under certain conditions. These are outlined below. The first three conditions relate to awareness of the oil sands by different groups.

5.8.3.1: Normalised, powerful sector

There were stark differences in familiarity amongst different audiences. Conventional oil and gas extraction was an established sector in the province. Smaller scale oil and gas extraction had a long tradition in the province. One of the major ice hockey teams is known as the Edmonton Oilers and the province was founded in part because of oil concerns (Takach, 2007). Oil and gas was a dominant and uncontroversial industry. The early oil sands mining companies, e.g. Syncrude and Suncor, had worked on technology to try to make oil sands extraction profitable since the late sixties. As a result, the conservative oil industry did not anticipate that there would be wide public scrutiny of this method of extracting oil. An example of this is the Oil Sands Discovery Centre in Fort McMurray. Although it was set up as an educational space, it was expected that visitors would be predominantly family and friends of oil sands workers (interview with museum manager). The government acted as a spokesperson for oil sands extraction until tar sands campaigning became an international news story. Oil companies based in Calgary did not see themselves as specifically 'oil sands companies' but saw this as just a small part of their global portfolio of operations. They did not expect to have to communicate meaning around the oil sands. Furthermore, those working in Calgary were particularly familiar with oil. Those working for the regulators were often recruited by companies to work on new project approvals (consultant during speech to industry and regulators, 2011). The perception was that this created a centralised, powerful strategic action field. Because the oil industry was so taken for granted, this meant that there was limited external framing or other forms of normative or cognitive meaning making from those working in the oil sands (Snow and Benford, 1992; Cornelissen, 2011). This created discursive space for social movement actors to explain their very different meaning making around oil sands extraction and its link to the end of the world as we know it through climate change and environmental destruction that looks like

Mordor[21]. This was also taking place at a time when there was wider transnational concern for climate change, popularised by Vice President of the USA (1992-2000), Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* and environmental social movement actors coming together to demonstrate a presence at the 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference, commonly known by the environmentalists as 'Copenhagen'. Between 30,000 and 100,000 people are said to have demonstrated in Copenhagen, with other mass demonstrations in Australia and London (BBC News, 2009).

5.8.3.2: Liability of newness:

The construct of liability of newness (Stinchcombe, 1965; Freeman et al 1983; Bruderl and Schussler, 1990) has previously been considered at the organisational level to understand how likely an organisation is to fail (Freeman et al. 1983). Here I use it to relate the newness of the resource (oil sands) and not to the age of the company. There is potential for future oil sands extraction elsewhere in the world, such as Venezuela and Madagascar, but Canada was the first to start. The logic of bearing witness was particularly useful in this case because there was a liability of newness (Stinchcombe 1965) in terms of mining oil, an unconventional energy that began to boom in the first years of the twenty-first century due to rising oil prices alongside concerns around peak oil. Consequently oil sands was established internationally as a new industrial practice that could still be stopped. Environmentalists were able to define a category of fossil fuel extraction that was not known to many people outside of the province. Developments in technology to extract the oil sands had been underway since the 1960s. The industry was expanding rapidly because global oil prices had made oil sands profitable. Consequently the expansion of the sector and applications for new 'projects' overwhelmed community resources and led to local concerns about how quickly development was taking place. It may seem strange that familiarity and liability of newness were both at play, but this created a potent mix for the unsuspecting oil executives in Calgary.

5.8.3.3: Visibility

Previous studies have considered the visibility or prominence of the company or brand to relate to the likelihood of stakeholder targeting (Meznar and Nigh, 1995; Marquis 2003; Ahmadjian and Robinson, 2001). Here I mean visibility of the extraction process itself

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[21] It was widely reported that UN Senior Advisor Maude Barlow described the oil sands as 'Mordor'

which is presented as sublime. For those experienced in traditional extraction, and/or those who perceived oil sands to be 'new', there was an opportunity for social movement actors to be the first to show visuals of 'tar sands'. This relates strongly to ideas around the sublime, in which physical size, ugly aesthetics and damage to nature are used to demonstrate moral concern (Burke, 1958). However, the activists attempted to demonstrate that this is not science fiction, but real and world-risking. This can be broken down into lack of direct experience, scale and the production of images.

5.8.3.3.1: Lack of direct experience

Unless one has family or work, the Lower Athabasca Region is a place rarely visited by Albertans. In the region, people were familiar with the idea of the oil sands but the area was not often visited by those without work or family there. Instead the Rockies were the preferred location for leisure trips and outdoor activities by those living in the main provisional metropolises of Calgary and Edmonton. As a result, even people within the region were unlikely to have experienced oil sands extraction first hand. Consequently, there was a lack of direct awareness about what the oil sands looked like. This led to the need to engage people and bring about awareness of the oil sands before there could be a mass mobilization against it. Therefore the logic of numbers is not possible and a small number of skilled actors were needed to bear witness first.

5.8.3.3.2: Scale

Another feature of oil sands deposits is their size. It is the second largest oil reserve in the world with 175 billion barrels economically recoverable using current technology (CAPP, 2010). This cannot all be mined, but social movement actors reported that oil sands deposits were found in an area the size of England, or Florida. Whilst this is true, the impression was often given that this would all be strip mined, which is not the case. That said, the scale of current mining projects is large, visible from space and condensed into one main area. This means that the oil sands is a more visual target for a discussion on climate change than farming, say, or private car usage. Also because oil sands mining take place in one core area, the social movement actors did not attempt to define which sites were managed by which companies. This meant that individual companies were not directly targeted, but instead all 'tar sands' was criticised. In some ways this made it more difficult for companies to respond directly because criticism was aimed at the field level and not at specific brands.

Figure 1: Map showing location of oil sands deposits
Source: (CAPP, 2010)

5.8.3.3.3: Production of images

Visual images – in person or mediated - of the oil sands mines were extremely rare, even within the OSDC. This left a number of blind spots for the industry. They were a conservative industry that thought that consumer concern only related to cost at the petrol pump, or services available at gas stations (issue management manager). They did not expect to have to communicate meaning around the oil sands or provide images to those outside of their supply chain or operating communities. As a result, images of oil sands mining were produced by detractors. These were particularly aerial images (photographs and video footage) of the oil sands mines. Sometimes these came from space, to demonstrate their size. Often this was footage from a small aircraft or helicopter. Greenpeace organised many of these images and commissioned a documentary film showing the epic scale of mining with a forty minute documentary filmed from above. Some of these images were used in an outside exhibition of images, in city centres around the UK, for example. Edward Burtynsky also shot large-format photographs of the Alberta oil sands designed to capture the sublime scale of the manmade mines for his exhibition and book, Oil. These was exhibited in Edmonton during 2010, an opportunity to assert that oil sands

mining was a huge-scale monstrous activity of global importance. For example, an issue manager stated that "The oil sands are 'visually ugly, it doesn't take much to find a bad picture". Another use of images was the 'Rethink Alberta' campaign which targeted audiences outside of Alberta, and challenged stereotypical images of Albertan tourism, notably the beauty of the Rocky Mountains, with images of tailings ponds and mines in the Lower Athabasca Region. This was a campaign that was sponsored by a coalition of international NGOs outside of the province.

Another prominent image is of a fish that appears to have a tumour, and another with two jaws. These images were also taken by London-based photographer, Jiri Rezac, between 2007 and 2009. There were a number of photographers working on projects in the region at this time, either independently or commissioned by the eNGOs. Images appeared in the *Economist, National Geographic, New Scientist* and broadsheet newspapers around the world such as *The New York Times, The Guardian*, as well as broadcasters such as *BBC*, *CBC* and *Aljazeera.*

Figure 2: Example of images

Source: (Rezac, 2007)

5.8.4: Community characteristics

5.8.4.1: Choice

There was little choice but to work for the sector or related services if one wanted a job in the Lower Athabasca Region. The oil sands were known to be the "main show in town" (Think Tank Director). Furthermore the industry had worked hard from the start to build relations and embed themselves within communities. This was partly because early CEOs, particularly Eric Newell, had considered it his moral obligation to address poverty and share wealth, but also because finding a stable workforce willing to live in a remote and cold region was crucial for an expanding industry (interview with former CEO).

Table 6: Contextual conditions under which the logic of bearing witness might be used

Characteristics	Sub-dimensions of characteristics	Description
Barriers to protest	Geographical	Cold weather for much of the year in Alberta and dispersed First Nations across a large province.
	Concern about corporate relations	Community dependence on industry for employment. Fear of reprisals against communities from the industry.
Public characteristics	Tradition of protest	Lack of history of protest as a means of persuasion in the province.
	Professional activists	The existence of salaried professional activists could give the impression that the issues were being taken care of, thus letting others 'off the hook'.
Contextual conditions	Normalised, powerful sector	The industry itself was considered as a taken-for-granted and accepted part of normal society, which lessens the likelihood of mass protest.
	Liability of newness	The newness of oil-sands as a source of oil extraction enabled NGOS to attempt to shape the debate on this 'new' form of oil mining. They did so by defining what it was and what its consequences were, to the public and stakeholders who were largely unfamiliar with these oil extraction methods.
	Visibility - *Lack of direct experience* - *Scale* - *Production of images*	Opportunity for social movement actors to be the first to show visuals of 'tar sands', especially in a manner that showed the ugly aesthetics and damage to nature that were consequential.
Community characteristics	Choice	There was little choice for many from local communities but to work for companies connected to the oil sands industry, making it difficult for them to mobilize against the companies

5.9: Why the logic of numbers could not be used

Exit strategies are difficult for consumers when a product is "substantial" (Hirschman, 1970; p.40). Oil can be said to be essential to modern, Western living with our dependence on cars, air travel and plastics (Smil, 2008). It was often said in interviews with oil executives that this applies as much to environmentalists as others. Because fuel from oil sands cannot be detected at the pump, and many multinational oil companies are involved, boycotts would have been inappropriate.

Whilst this was beyond the scope of this study, it is worth noting that there were some attempts at an exit strategy in the sense that social movement actors were connecting to American environmentalists and local people to try to stop the Keystone XL. There was a large demonstration outside the White House. In this way, activists felt that they could "cut off arteries that are fuelling this monstrosity" (Klein, 2011) by focusing attention on pipelines that would open up the oil sands exports to new markets such as America, Europe and Asia. In this way it could indicate that the logic of bearing witness is being used by environmentalists and indigenous campaigners at the start of the lifecycle of the social movement, with other strategies being used later, such as targeting government policies (for example EU Fuel Directives) or pipelines as a way of damaging profits for the oil sands industry, without having to mobilise a politically conservative population already heavily embedded as a consequence of oil sands economic benefits.

However this should be seen more as collective civil disobedience (a strategy that falls under the logic of bearing witness) because those protesting understood that they would be arrested if they did not move, and the act of arrest was the aim of the protest in order to demonstrate the strength of personal conviction. This was especially the case with celebrities, such as Bill McKibben (American environmentalist) Daryl Hannah (actress) Julian Bond (civil rights leader) Robert F. Kennedy Jr (environmental lawyer and member of the Kennedy dynasty) (Associated Press, 2013).

5.10: Theoretical implications

Activists attempted to erode the legitimacy of the existing institutional arrangements (Zietsma and McKnight, 2009) and provide a range of related but different forms of expertise or witness to discuss issues caused by the industry. This identity work was designed to provide a new set of normative associations to 'tar sands' (Suddaby and

Lawrence, 2006). Through the accounts of particular "profiles from the front line" (NGO report, 2010) they were able to embody the issues as they perceived them. These bearing witness identities are *eye witness, victim, custodian* or *scientific expert*. The role of NGOs as 'organisers' and 'narrators' is also notable and particularly came out in trying to showcase and frame the bearing witness identities.

An understanding of this bearing witness form of protest goes some way to explain why aboriginal people are such an important group that corporations respond to. Not only do they live in proximity to the extractive industry, but they also act to legitimise environmental campaigns (Kramer et al, 2013). Articulate individuals are a particularly important social movement actor because small numbers of people are able to act as spokespeople and representatives for the community at large.

This form of identity work does not seek to offer particular demands or solutions that the industry, or individual firms can easily respond to. Instead it problematizes a large and powerful sector in the province and creates associations that it is dirty, monstrous and deadly. It provides credible narrators to describe their perspectives. This provides an opportunity for individual actors to assert their own agency and demonstrate their own variety of expertise or knowledge, "to voice their opinions based upon their life skills and experiences" as one community member stated during a speech to government and industry officials (2011). This could be formal science training, or a life time spent on trap lines or in the bush (Whiteman and Cooper, 2000). Here lies an attempt to reassert who acts as the 'referees' in public life (Greenwood, 2008), away from the "roster of organisations involved in generating and maintaining corporate political power" (Barley, 2008) to other actors who do not hold formal positions and may be marginal or fringe actors working to resist the status quo.

5.10.1: Explaining corporate responses

Furthermore, this logic of protest explains the ways in which corporate actors responded to their external environment to maintain their status quo, through compartmentalising indigenous communities, communicating extensively with the general public who were the main audience of the social movement action and the environmental social movement actors, and responding very differently to these groups. The industry attempts to respond by bearing witness themselves. This allowed them to maintain the status quo and ensure that not only did their projects continue, but were further able to expand. The logic of bearing

witness also explains why community members and First Nations were of such a concern to companies. Not only did such groups have an important regulatory role in the province, and close proximity to the operations, but they were also able to provide powerful, emotional contributions to the social movement against the industry, even in small numbers, by acting as bearing witnesses, able to demonstrate their roles as victims, observers and custodians of the natural environment. This gave them powerful cognitive-normative powers (Suddaby and Lawrence, 2006) that meant they were an extremely important set of stakeholder groups. This has led to greater levels of community involvement in order to ensure the transfer of benefits to communities (Bowen et al, 2010; Tracey et al. 2005) as well as to providing supportive conditions through education and employment.

5.11: Conclusions

This chapter has served to explain the kinds of pressures that the corporations faced, which were uncharacteristic because particular companies were not targeted according to their brands. Instead the whole notion of oil sands as 'dirty oil' or tar sands was challenged using the bearing witness logic of protest. The campaigners set about asserting an array of witness bearer identities to both demonstrate rational scientific foundations as well as their emotional and traditional concerns. Furthermore I have explained the environmental conditions that led to such a logic of protest being used by the social movement. Figure 3 below shows the difference between the standard framework that we would expect from an activist group targeting a firm (in accordance with den Hond and de Bakker, 2007) compared with the findings of the current study (Figure 4), in which the previously overlooked logic of protest – the logic of bearing witness – was used to conduct identity work to create new understanding about the oil sands and place pressure on the different corporations.

Social Movement Actors

Logic of numbers

Logic of material damage

Target firm (challenge or work with)

(Possibly) Establish alternative field

Target companies

Social Movement Actors

Means/Logic of Protest

Focus/Goal

What this leads to
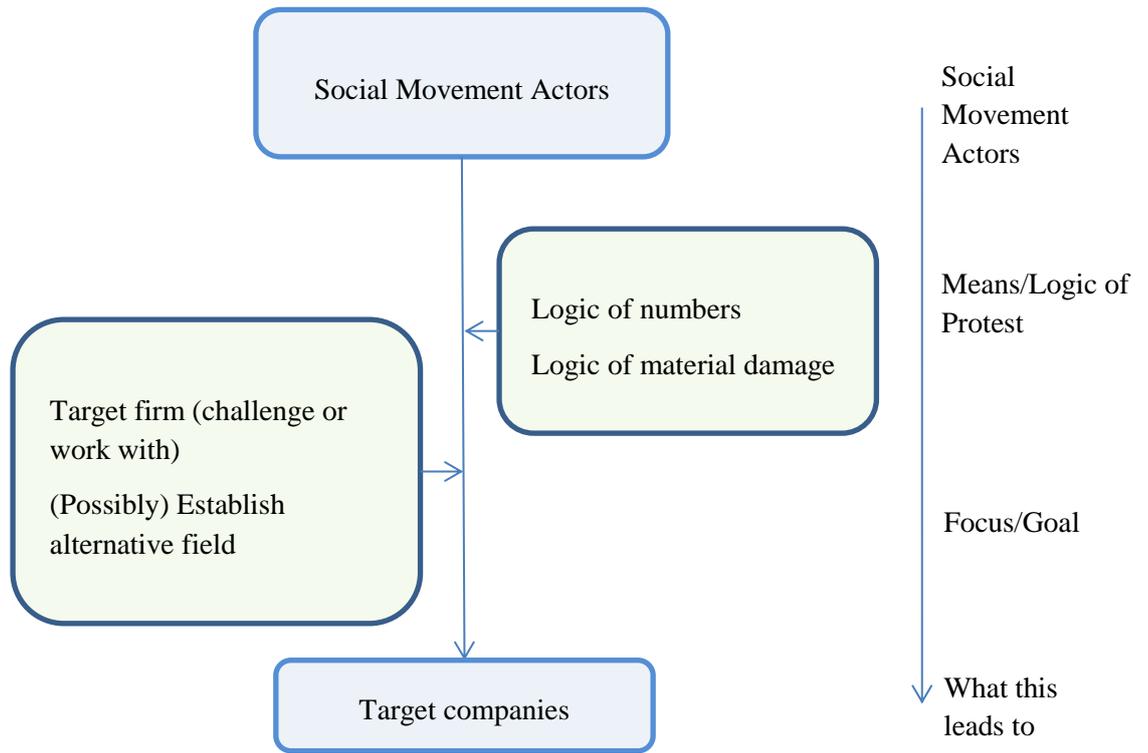
Figure 3: Standard framework as expected for an activist group targeting a firm

Community members

NGOs

Raise concerns about

Environment

Water

Land

Community health

Wildlife/traditional lifestyles

Logic of bearing witness

Increased public concern

Social movement actors

Means/logic of protest

Focus/Goal

What this leads to
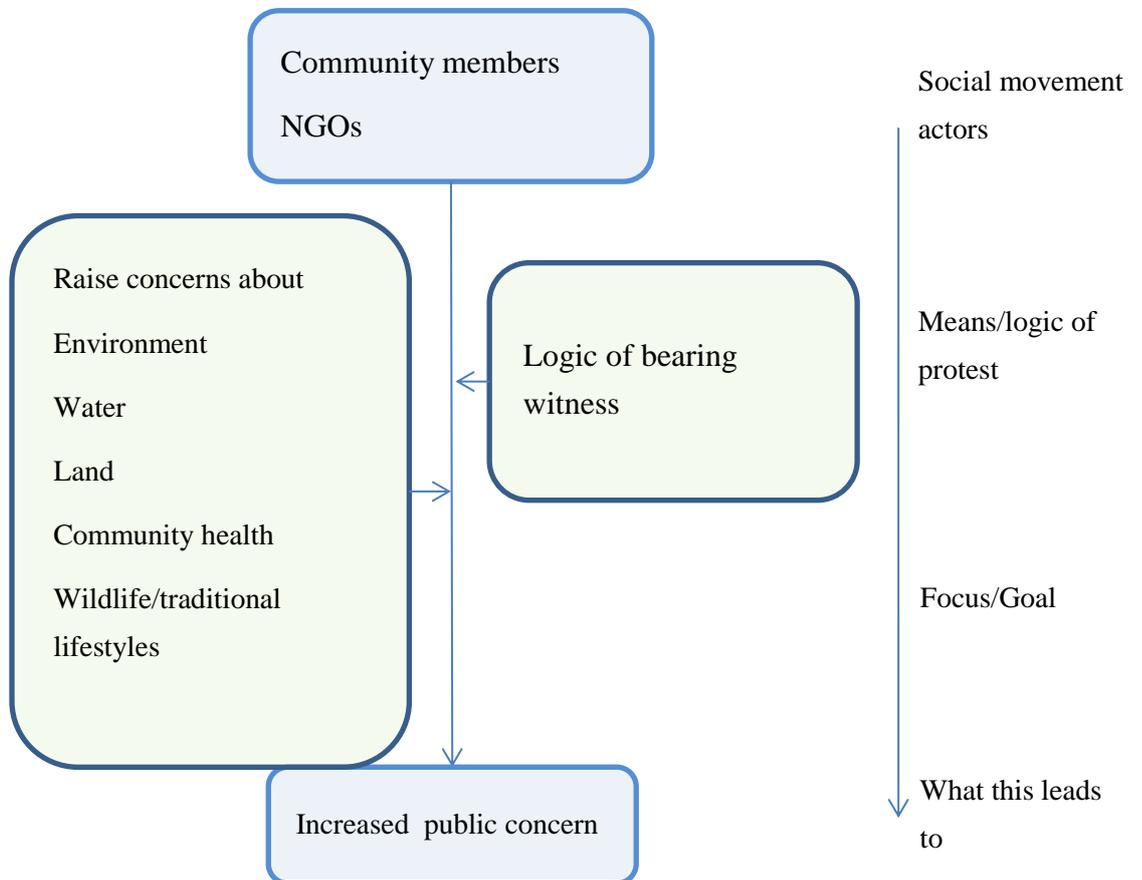
Figure 4: Revised framework based on the Alberta Oil Sands Case

The next chapter will discuss the corporate responses to this array of stakeholder groups and is divided into four sections which represent four different facets of the situation created through activists using the logic of bearing witness (see numbers on figure 4 above for ordering and relation of corporate responses to the different stakeholder pressures and groups). These four sections include (1) communicative activity aimed at the general public and trying to balance environmental criticism, (2) relational responses to environmental NGOs, (3) responses and involvement with communities and, finally (4) the collaborative organisation that was established to focus on addressing issues important to stakeholders through improving the industry's collective performance.

Chapter 6: Corporate Responses

This chapter discusses the various forms of corporate response to stake holder pressures. Table 7 provides an overview of the different types of stakeholders that the industry engages with through corporate responses. More specifically, it shows the different types of issues associated with each stakeholder group and the corresponding individual and field level tactics that companies use to respond to them. In the following subsections, I shall discuss each of these responses in more detail to give a nuanced understanding of the relationship between stakeholder pressure exerted and corporate response to this. The next section is organised as follows; firstly, the corporate responses to the public scrutiny developed by stakeholders using the logic of bearing witness are examined. Secondly, I discuss how corporations relate directly to the concerns and behaviours of eNGOs. Thirdly, I consider the strategies used in managing specific community stakeholder groups, displaying how powerful such stakeholder groups can be for exerting institutional pressures pertaining to their regulatory, cognitive and normative positions. Finally, I describe how a collaborative organisational form was developed in order to better meet stakeholder environmental concerns through innovation and performance.

Table 7: Corporate responses to the different pressures originating from various stakeholder groups

Group to which corporations respond	Issue(s) company is responding to	Corporate responses	
		Individual level	**Field level**
1) Public	• Concern about the environment	• Factual • Educational • Personal (employees)	• Factual • Educational (energy literacy) • Personal (showcasing employees or inclusion)
2) NGOs	• Oppositional stance • Issue raising	• Influence • Collaborate • Dismiss/ignore	• Discredit
3) Communities	• Environmental concern (social movement groups) • Social barriers and providing benefits (majority)	Oil sands or community concerned • Investing • Introducing • Instructing • Integrating • inspiring	Community centric • instilling • inspiring
4) OSLI (environmental and community concerns)	• Need for performance (not just communication) • Maintain control (no regulation) • Centralising field	• Using OSLI within communications as a good news story	• Performance • Aligning interests

6.1: Individual and collective public facing communicative responses

6.1.1: Introduction

This chapter considers the way in which companies, individually and collectively, responded to the increased attention and pressures that their industry faced. This attention was brought about by the social movement but was aimed at the general public.

Consequently, this led to institutional pluralism because there were heterogeneous interests at work (Kraatz and Block, 2008). For many people working for the industry this critical attention was felt through friends and family who challenged their work for the 'tar sands'. This was particularly so in 2008/2009 when the social movement actors had begun working intensively in Alberta. An issue manager described it as "fever pitch". This featured in the media.

> *"It was almost literally you could open the paper and there was something about the evils of tar sands. Or there was something about what implicates the evils of tar sands." (Issue Manager)*

It also took place at the personal level through people's social networks. He described the experience of contractors being "cornered at the soccer practice or a cocktail party or a barbeque". He reflects

> *"[the] temperature was up high, there really were, literally, these barbeque conversations, one lady joined [our company] and a couple of weeks later went to a barbeque and people said 'I heard you went to the dark side! So you know she didn't know what to say" (Issue Manager).*

Consequently, they responded to the public, as well as having strategies to respond to environmentalists. These were based around education and information, personalising the industry and through the use of an extra-institutional actor who provided a set of powerful counter frames that helped those working in stakeholder and issue management to justify their roles and position themselves as the balanced middle ground. This allowed them to position themselves as reining over issues and the rightful change agents and overseers.

6.1.2: How does the industry respond and why?

6.1.2.1: Acquiescence

Oliver (1991) predicts that acquiescence will be the first response to institutional pressure. However, as noted by others, this is extremely difficult in the context of institutional complexity (Greenwood et al., 2011). The technical core - extraction- and the actual product category itself – oil or tar sands – were being focused on by social movement actors. Acquiescing by either shutting down operations or slowing down expansion would have vast financial implications for the oil companies. Furthermore this would not be palatable with many other key stakeholder groups of the companies, such as the banking and financial industry, provincial and federal governments or world markets. Whilst Oliver (1991) considers conforming to be a passive response, this is not the case when acquiescence would

involve developing technology that does not exist to address environmental impacts brought on by extraction.

Consequently the industry's response activity involved ways of influencing stakeholders. This was primarily achieved by demonstrating that they met stakeholders' values and demands or by actively trying to shape understandings about their product and practices.

6.1.2.2: Communication

This work was carried out by corporate communication and issue management staff. They lived in a city, Calgary, where many people were employed directly or indirectly by the oil and gas industry. The industry had previously taken a conservative approach to local stakeholder engagement and did not consider proactive communications to be necessary. The provincial government acted as a spokesperson for the oil sands. The industry's activities were considered to be of no interest to consumers whose concerns were over the price of 'gas' at the pump or the facilities available at gas stations[22]. Consequently, prior to scrutiny, communication strategies had been minimal. The industry understood the anti-'tar sands' campaigns and subsequent public scrutiny to be a consequence of lack of information about the oil sands. These communicative strategies combine factual, rational information about the company, issues or industry, with a strategy to personalise and present the 'human' face of the industry. The communications tone adopted was balanced to stress that the companies were in the 'middle ground' (Government Relations Manager). This approach was designed to counter the social movement actors' activity that was intended to show up the industry as dishonest and a vast 'beast' (Environmentalist). They attempted to surmount scrutiny by adopting a stance as follows:

> *"The position is that they deserve to be scrutinised. They acknowledge that they have an impact but feel it is out of context"(Think Tank Director)*

They adopted an attitude that accepted the need for scrutiny to try to surmount social movement action through 'over communication'.

Below I describe the ways in which the oil sands operators communicated with the public. These varied depending on whether they appeared to be providing facts, explanation or personal information. This is discussed more below.

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[22] The word 'gas' is used in Canada to describe what is called 'petrol' in the UK

Table 8: Range of communication responses

		Rational		Emotional
		Factual	**Explanation / Educational**	**Personal**
Level of Response	**Individual**	Online information about issues and challenges Virtual portal showing sustainable development or operations	Over-communicating: good news stories Touring media and government Un-corporate tone blog	*Employees as conduits* Conversation pieces on intranet for staff Employee Ambassadors *Website with banner header showing employees and their personal interests*
	Field level	(OSDG) Economic benefits information (Trade association) fact book	*Energy literacy* In schools through industry funded education charity Book: Our Petroleum Challenge Lobbying to change school curriculum to bring it up to date Oil Sands Discovery Centre [23]	*Showcasing employees* CAPP advertising using real employees or experts (Founder of Greenpeace, Head of Engineering at University of Alberta *Including everyone* Alberta in Energy providing forum and advertising

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[23] Whilst this is run by the provincial government, the museum relies on corporate sponsorship and involves educational space for adults and children to visit on school trips. These spaces are specifically funded by oil companies.

6.1.2.2.1: Individual companies

6.1.2.2.1.1: Individual and Factual

At the individual company level more communications materials were created about their particular operations. This involved providing more web-based materials. One company developed an online portal that allowed people to virtually explore operations. Others provided more information about issues, such as land reclamation[24] or water management. One created a message from their President. This information centred on facts. Because campaigns against tar sands had centred heavily on research, companies offered their own research and suggested that "the opponents of the industry don't understand the issue. Here are the real facts." (Think Tank Director).

6.1.2.2.1.2: Individual and Educational

One company developed a blog that allowed them to discuss issues in a more informal and light-hearted way than their typical corporate communications. The weekly blog was initially distributed over email and it was hoped that it would appeal to a certain type of influencer stakeholder who would pass on the posts to their social network. The blog uses humour, cynicism and parody, allowing the writers to say things that are 'uncorporate' and surprising, whilst also maintaining power (Murtola, 2012).

One aspect of educational activity involved providing oil sands tours to media personnel and government officials. The company received many media inquiries about issues; they also sought to "proactively try to tell specific oil sands stories" (Communications Manager). This gave journalists help to understand their business and government the opportunity to have

> *"...frank discussions with them about how we are managing our energy and our impacts because they have a lot of questions and what they believe is what they see in the paper. So it's once you're on the ground at our facilities you get a different picture" (Communications Manager).*

Besides this, companies also tried to create positive new stories about their work, particularly in addressing environmental issues and working with aboriginal communities.

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[24] Oil sands mining involves removing boreal forest to extract the bituminous sands. It is a legal requirement that land is 'reclaimed' or returned to a 'productive state' (Alberta Government, 2013).

6.1.2.2.2: Individual and Personal

6.1.2.2.2.1: Employees as conduits

Internal communications were an important avenue for individual companies. This was uploaded to an intranet in order to provide employees with stories, information about oil sands and Leadership Presentation that acted as "a town hall for our President" (Communications Manager). They also supplied information for managers so that they would become the point of contact if employees had questions about oil sands or campaigns being run. They supplied 'conversation pieces' for family and friends who challenged employees about working for the oil sands (Communications Manager).

> *"My grandmother has asked me how can you do work for the tar sands, and I'm not the only employee that gets that kind of question. The oil sands has been very targeted, and very publicly targeted, by opposition forces, so my role internally I see is to talk honestly and transparently about our business and with friends and family or anybody else who will listen and to try to help them understand how we are managing our impacts. That they feel good at working for [X]. So on the internal side that's our focus" (Communications Manager).*

According to Pache and Santos (2010) employees, as internal representation agents, are crucial to understanding responses to stakeholder pressures. They act as the 'responders' to a given situation, and may use their personal experience or identities (Lesfrud and Meyer, 2012; Lounsbury, 2001) to determine suitable ways of responding. Firstly they determine outcomes and responses, such as the communication manager described above. Secondly, they are handled as a valuable stakeholder group of the industry, who can be influenced by the negative descriptions of 'dirty oil' and the awkward social encounters these create with family members. Employees were not just deciding on how to respond to negative attention brought on by the social movement, but were also reconciling their own moral compass with their position in the industry.

> *"You work in an industry that's under scrutiny and it's [pause] hard sometimes not to take it personally because if I didn't think we were doing the right thing, I couldn't do what I do. How could you, if you fundamentally, if you were at odds with what your company did? It's probably not the right place for you. Right? You gotta go to work every day. This is my work family. I spend more time with the people here than I do with my spouse, who I barely see" (Communications Manager)*

Strategies aimed at the public also used employees symbolically in advertising (i.e. on websites and in the trade association's high profile advertising campaign which featured employees alongside other critical allies) in an attempt to demonstrate a friendly face of big oil to the public. In this way it could be seen as bridging with the general public; but of course in presenting this set of new identities and frames, the adverts buffered individual companies and negative perceptions. One employee appeared to sum this up:

> *"I couldn't be the face of Big Oil in the oil sands if I didn't think we were trying to manage our impacts, on an integrity, personal level" (Communications Manager)*

Demonstrating individual, personal 'faces' of Big Oil served to demonstrate that the industry was managing its impacts. It also acted as a reminder that real, local people were employed by the industry. This meant that people were less likely to speak out about the oil sands, even if they had private concerns. It also meant that when the environmentalists responded to the advertising campaign, the industry association was able to declare that the 'subvertising' - which spoofed those that appeared in the adverts - was bullying real people in a national newspaper.

Thus I find that employees are crucial, firstly because they are decision makers who interpret pressures and determine outcomes and responses. Secondly, they are a key constituent of the company that are managed as a critical stakeholder group. Employees were needed in large numbers because of the growing expansion of the industry and therefore being employer of choice was important for the multinational companies who created materials to get 'their story out'. Thirdly, all employees had the capacity to act as bridging agents to their own social networks. This represents a significant opportunity and a conduit to sharing information that supports the oil sands through informal channels and personal relations.

6.1.2.2.3: Collective Communication Responses
Communication responses also happened at the collective level. Individual companies provided support in the form of employees' time to the trade association. These responses were to demonstrate those working in the oil sands, establish facts and create energy literacy agenda.

6.1.2.2.3.1: Collective and Factual

A fact booklet was written by the trade association, as were fact sheets online (CAPP, 2010). The Oil Sands Developers Group, which had previously focused on developing infrastructure in the Fort McMurray area and providing the government with forecasting information, was paramount to this. They provided information on the economic benefits of the industry. This acted as 'cool rationality' (Rao, 2008).

6.1.2.2.3.2: Collective and Educational

Energy Literacy was aimed at smaller audiences than most other field-level communication strategies. These types of communications were designed to shape the normative and cultural-cognitive understanding of the oil sands (Suddaby and Lawrence, 2006). The justification for this type of communication was that the general population did not understand enough about energy and therefore the industry was lobbying government to change the curriculum. School children also received sponsored hand-outs and information about the industry in schools. A book, called 'Our Petroleum Challenge', was prominent in schools (Trade Association Executive). The industry also funded an energy literacy charity. These teachers stated that they offered 'bias-balanced' interactive teaching. They also took teenagers to conferences. Finally, the 'Oil Sands Discovery Centre' was a further example of attempts to 'enlighten' people about oil sands. It was predominantly aimed at family and friends visiting operations staff, and acted as an educational "stopping point" with interactive panels, machinery, a cartoon scientist and a large educational space for school trips, and conference facilities.

6.1.2.2.4: Collective and Personal

6.1.2.2.4.1: Trade Association Advertising

Communications also took place at the collective level through the trade association. Their advertising, across several marketing communication channels, focused on positively promoting the industry and reframing it, based on the identities of employees. These individuals also described oil sands as the consistency of yoghurt or peanut butter, framing the oil sands with domestic (and non-threatening) associations. The use of employees or important experts, such as the Head of Engineering at the University of Alberta, or a founder of Greenpeace (turned lobbyist), within the advertising was particularly important because it mirrored the activity of the social movement actors by providing a set of experts from across the industry who described their activities but also brought up their love of

nature, childhoods spent on the family farm, and concerns about environmental impacts. It also situated these employees on operational sites or in the natural environment. This attempt to personalise the industry was 'jammed' by online activists[25] (Harold, 2004), who designed spoof adverts to accuse the trade association of subverting the environmental impact of the industry's activities by trying to manipulate public perception through spin, also known as 'green washing' (Ramus et al., 2005) .

The trade association established the Alberta is Energy forum. This promoted the idea that everybody in the province was positively impacted by the oil sands

> *"From high-rise offices to the local corner store, the power of Alberta fuels our economy and supplies the world with safe, secure, responsibly developed energy. Whether it's a hotel in Provost or a car dealership in Red Deer[26], the energy industry plays an important role in the success of Alberta businesses" (material from Alberta is Energy website, 2011.)*

Their aim was to build awareness of how the energy industry touches the lives of those living or working in the province. Whilst Meznar and Nigh (1995) state that a firm is legitimate when its actions or outputs coincide with the value patterns of society, here we see a way in which the trade association is attempting to shape the values and normative associations of the industry. The industry is framed as providing collective benefits across the province and sectors and not just to those who work for the industry[27].

6.1.3: Theoretical Implications

The industry's communications responses developed over time. Initially, when there was limited awareness of the industry, companies avoided communicating. Once the industry started to feel societal pressure from environmentalists, the media, and especially people in their social network, such as family members or friends or other people in their community that they were close to, they began to communicate in order to respond to the emergent pressures. The trade association began to respond reactively and then proactively to defend

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[25] Also known as subvertising, this is a style of rhetorical protest that creates spoofs or prank marketing material.

[26] Small towns in the province of Alberta

[27] This has echoes of Arendt's (2003) statement that "when all are guilty, no one is". Here everyone benefits.

the industry. This is in part because attacks were made against the industry as a whole, and not at specific companies, with the focus being on raising issues and identities under the bearing witness logic of protest.

The industry realised that they must provide more information in the form of factual information, as well as proactively communicate 'good news stories'. Thus they used factual, educational and personal appeals to provide information about the oil sands and to influence the public's perception of the industry and individuals' relation to it. Employees were central to this aim.

These communications responses were designed to provide positive stories and re-personalise the industry for those in the province, whether by reminding them of their close associations or through establishing public faces working for the industry. In many ways this strategy mirrored that of the social movement actors who opposed them by providing factual information, asserting expertise and humanising a cause to bring about personal association.

It is also apparent that employees play an important role. Not only are employees critical to the success and expansion of an industry, but they are excellent at facilitating communication, either as conduits or bridgers themselves, or as identities that companies can harness to improve their own corporate identity. This may be reactive, when challenged by someone they know, or proactive, as in the discussing of stories or information. Friends and family represent an interesting dynamic in the institutional field. They are the first contact point between a company and the general public. Their opinions are also extremely influential in employees' lives. They also span political or ideological positions. Activists I met socialised with these people. They may also share information about the industry's practice that the activist would not otherwise know about. In order to give his account of the industry's legitimacy, one activist told me "I've got friends… I've got a friend who is quite highly placed in the oil sands company" (Think Tank Director). Family is considered an institutional logic (Friedland and Alford, 1991; Thornton et al, 2012). It therefore seems surprising that the role of one's closest social network is not more widely considered as an important relational structure for transmitting and shaping values. Friends and family offer an opportunity to mix with people in other parts of the institutional field and therefore a corporate response is to use these relations and networks as channels.

6.2: Relational responses to environmental NGOs

These responses are aimed at the stakeholders themselves and are used when the environmental group are willing to meet or cooperate. Progressive companies were oriented towards collaboration with groups as a way of finding joint solutions, gaining resources and containing potential sources of challenge.

6.2.1: Meet and Tour

Issue and communication managers stated that they were happy to meet and provide tours to various groups. Of course this is a strategy only open to those companies that have already established operations, and not for those at the start of the process. Particularly important were NGO groups or 'offices' that were from the company's headquarter country. Antagonistic NGOs were also welcomed, shown hospitality, given specific information (including scientific journal papers). An issue manager for a major corporation described how he agreed to meet with an environmentalist even though the boss had been aggressive. When the next person working for the organization attended and had a "closed mind" and "wanted to have an excuse to yell at someone" they were struck off the list (issue manager). When asked about an antagonist NGO, one of the interviewees replied: *"Have them call me. I'm sure ... you can be the bridge builder"*.

The aim of the corporations is to tour the environmentalists and ideally to talk to them regularly to build relations and they expected that they would be able to win them over with a combination of friendly interaction and scientific fact. At the very least the purpose of this was to demonstrate openness toward NGOs, even those that were highly antagonistic and, in so doing, to project a willingness to engage and to be transparent.

6.2.2: Collaborate

Corporations from the industry were keen to collaborate with NGOs. This collaboration was achieved through consultation with two NGOs. I was informed that this was because the NGO's key stakeholder is the industry. However, this was often a strange collaboration because:

> *"They smack them one minute and then want to work with them on the other"* (Consultant).

These NGOs worked discreetly with companies. One environmentalist told me that they would only work on projects that had already been granted regulatory approval. They felt

that this was a way of addressing environmental improvements without encouraging further development.

Other environmental groups, especially those working in the province and with no critical position towards the oil sands were worked with on particular projects, especially wildlife projects. The oil sands companies, individually or at the field level, through a foundation they established provided funds for oil sands projects. In one case, an NGO that had received funds from oil companies (jointly and independently) joined the social movement against the oil sands and in this case they struggled to find further income.

The responses below are critical of the environmentalists and were used alongside the responses above. These were used when environmentalists were not willing to meet or collaborate with companies. This led to dismissive responses based on private justifications. This also led to an alternative set of more critical and creative responses from an extra institutional entrepreneur.

6.2.3: Dismissal

This is an activity that takes place in private rather than as a public response. In this way it is similar to ignoring. But it is important to note that ignoring responses were as a result of a dismissal of the group. This was justified in three ways. They were considered *non-representative and extreme*, *hypocritical*, or having *ulterior motivation.*

6.2.3.1: Non representative groups

Being accused of being unrepresentative or 'fringe' is a drawback of the bearing witness logic of protest. These stakeholders were represented as radical, extreme alarmists (Hensmans, 2003) rather than individuals drawing on minimal resources and conducting identity work in order to gain international attention. One interviewee defines such 'fringe' elements to be:

> *"...those that are on the edges that really aren't prepared to enter into a dialogue to look for win-win kind of balance perspectives" (Environmental Manager).*

6.2.3.2: Hypocritical

Secondly, environmentalists were considered hypocrites. This risk of being thought of as hypocrital is one reason people avoid judging moral issues (Arendt, 2003). Here those working for the industry felt there was no alternative to oil-based economies. Those I met from progressive companies agreed that there were environmental challenges in their industry that matched those focused on by environmentalists. Consequently they felt that those who drove cars or wore clothes had no right to criticise oil sands if they were not willing to find alternative solutions. This positioned those working for companies as true change agents.

> " the Greenpeaces of the world, waving banners and doing dangerous things. If you climb all over operating equipment, yeah OK so it looks good on the six o'clock news. But it doesn't change anything. And I've been in the inside of companies and I know it doesn't change anything, it just makes companies more adamant to push away from such organisations" (Issue Manager).

6.2.3.3: Ulterior motives

Fame and money were discussed as the motivations for the environmental groups' "assault" on the industry. I asked 'why do you think they have taken this outside position?' to one consultant working with a number of progressive oil sands companies and he replied "*fifteen minutes of fame. Makes them feel good*".

> "We [he rhetorically imagines he is Greenpeace] need to raise our profile so we get our cheque from Mrs Jones you know every week or whatever, so the stunting or the publicity nature of it doesn't necessarily make a big change or is that effective at driving change, but it might be effective at bringing in fifty bucks" (Issue Manager)

This overlooks the role of foundations in funding anti-'tar sands' campaigns. This was known about by one company, who had looked into one of the oil sands companies and another executive who told me that his company had met with American foundations in order to 're-educate' them about the oil sands. This justification positions environmental groups as non-strategic and also suggests that environmentalists do not have genuine moral foundations for their campaigns. This diminishes their structural ties and their agency.

When an NGO had carried out direct action against a company, that company sued the individuals involved. This is partly because they were not employees of a particular NGO, nor did they associate with the Canadian arm of the organization, so suing the organization would be legally difficult. Once this was done they "agreed to keep distance".

6.2.4: Discrediting

Kraatz and Block (2008) suggest that one way to respond to institutional pluralism is to eliminate it by marginalising some identities. I have explained that companies were keen to discuss their openness to meeting with NGOs. However, an extra-institutional actor, Ezra Levant, an outsider as a former tobacco lobbyist who denied links with the oil sands, played a critical role. This was extremely important in bolstering the industry. He did this in three main ways, through discrediting the identities of social movement actors with personal character assassinations, creating space within the institutional field, and providing new frames that were positive about the industry. This was done firstly through a book, then a speaking tour, followed by founding The Ethical Oil Institute and creating advertising that was aired in the USA that suggested that oil sands was the responsible alternative to Saudi Arabian oil because of their human rights record.

6.2.4.1: Personal character attacks

Levant was a helpful addition to the industry because he could be highly critical of the bearing witness actors involved in the social movement. The book focused on eliminating the legitimacy of three main groups – Greenpeace, the doctor who had made claims about cancer rates and health issues and the Cooperative Bank, which was beginning to fund a legal challenge against the government for failed treaty rights of one community, the Beaver Lake Cree[28].

6.2.4.2: Space creating

Levant held very strong conservative political opinions and was critical of environmental identities. He created space for progressive companies to present themselves as 'the middle ground'. In this way he mirrored the social movement because by positioning himself as more extreme it gave space within the organisation field for others to demonstrate their balanced concern for economics and environmental 'challenges'. In this way the industry came to mirror the social movement actors who were careful "not to tread on each other's toes" (Environmentalist)

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[28] The Beaver Lake Cree were not included in this study because they were geographically removed from other oil sands communities.

"setting one group out as the ultra-radicals gives space for others here" (Think Tank Director).

Thus, those working for progressive oil sands companies could present themselves as 'the middle ground' who were seeking balance between economic prosperity and environmental issues. This was a different positioning from 'David vs. Goliath' battles.

6.2.4.3: Framing

The book also developed a set of collective action frames (Benford and Snow, 2000) based around oil sands being an ethical oil from a democratic country. This was widely referenced by those who saw themselves as the middle ground. It was also used by politicians especially during international diplomacy[29].

6.2.5: Summary

Effectively, the relational responses used by firms to respond to NGOs vary in terms of *level of activity* and *types of response*. In terms of level of activity, firm responses can be classed as either passive or active. In terms response type, the firm response ranges from conflicting to cooperative. Firms adopt a conflictual type of response when they cannot build mutually beneficial linkages. Perhaps surprisingly, firms were willing to meet and host NGOs that were publically critical of oil sands. When NGOs would not cooperate, the firm response involved privately dismissing them. At the field level, attempts were made to discredit them; this was especially the case with those who had been most active in bearing witness. This demonstrates that the firms were not entirely able to decide how best to respond; those who attacked them were not necessarily willing to bridge them. These relational responses are summarised in table 9.

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[29] Joe Oliver, the Canadian Minister for Natural Resources, used these frames throughout his presentation at London School of Economics, in November 2012. This presentation was "Canada: a reliable, responsible contributor to global energy security and economic stability".

Table 9: Relational responses to NGOs

		Conflictual (issues/framing)	Cooperative (build relations)
Level of activity	**Passive**	*Ignore/dismiss* (i.e. private dismissal)	*Influence* (i.e. meet and tour/win over)
	Active	*Discredit* (aggressive)	*Collaborate with moderate NGOs* (win win)

6.3: Community relations as maintenance work

6.3.1: Introduction

This chapter considers the ways in which companies were responding to communities. These responses were to environmental concerns, requests for benefits and social needs or barriers to community development, as perceived by those working for companies. This demonstrates that corporate community relations are a core type of institutional maintenance work for companies within the oil industry. Much of the existing corporate community relations activity has been overlooked by institutional theorists who have only recently recognised that organizational fields, even during an era of globalization, are geographically rooted (Marquis et al. 2010).

Community relations executives use a range of strategies that vary in their levels of involvement with communities. Some of this activity seeks to involve communities in internal operational matters. Much of the corporate community interactions, however, are about seeking to influence, involve or embed companies in community life, in order to demonstrate or pass on benefits of neighbouring operations to the community, to ensure not

only that the status quo is maintained, but also that institutional arrangements are supportive of further expansion of the industry. It also contributes to understanding of the national, community and organizational attributes that determine what type of community relations activity will be utilised. This type of activity is a type of bridging activity that involves influencing, and even seeking societal change, within rural aboriginal communities. Community relations activities may lead to transformative outcomes for communities (Bowen et al. 2010). It also leads to transformative outcomes for companies because it may influence the way that community members behave or think about their company or practices.

This chapter outlines the range of strategies which fall on a continuum of involvement. It also discusses the reasons given for these community relations activities. Companies relate independently to local aboriginal communities from other stakeholders or issue management activities (Kraatz and Block 2008; Pratt and Foreman 2000). This form of compartmentalisation builds specific units and develops professional roles designed to attend to the needs of those in the locality of operations. These practitioners are often geographically separated from those working in communications, environment or issue management roles because they are based, or are spending more time near, operations rather than in offices. They may also have more autonomy in their communications because they are perceived to best understand community needs (environment and stakeholder manager). The claims or demands that are particular and possible to address, without stopping the expansion of the industry, are carried out. These are not done solely in the interests of corporate philanthropy (Brammer and Millington, 2004; Burke, 1984). They are established to demonstrate commitment to the values and beliefs of particular constituents. They are also devised to realign the values of the communities with those of the industry and are consequently not merely symbolic but substantive (in contrast to Meyer and Rowan, 1977; Lounsbury, 1999; Westphal and Zajac 1994; 1998).

These initiatives are *investing* (which could be seen as a form of deterring) *introducing, instructing, integrating, instilling* and *inspiring*. They represent increasing levels of relational embedding within community life and within this they increasingly find new ways of collaborating. Instructing, integrating, instilling and inspiring are all forms of *educating*. This institutional work was necessary in order to maintain the status quo of the industry, it was important that the community shared the same cognitive foundations as those working within the industry and more widely within the region. This maintenance work aims to disseminate ideas or develop capacity with new stakeholder groups. In this way it shares

some of the strategies that Suddaby and Lawrence (2006) consider tools for constructing institutions, such as embedding and educating. At the community level, companies work with communities individually, through the industry association and through the progressive coalition, OSLI, to bring about societal change within the small, remote, aboriginal communities. This bridging activity focuses on community centric activity rather than company centric activity. Over time, some of the progressive multinational oil companies collectively begin to try to address the complex social problems that they believe to be a consequence of failed government strategies or the consequence of rapid industrial development.

6.3.2: Community relations work

A range of bridging work with operating communities was taking place in the oil sands region. These different approaches increase in involvement with the community. Involvement with the community includes various dimensions such as trust, relationships, layers of community (from leadership through to young people) and a change in who determines what 'benefits' or 'barriers' are addressed. They also reflect a change in how focused on particular project pressures they are. The most minimal form of bridging work aims to minimise public hostility through 'containment' work. This was done by providing money or other material benefits to the community.

The most involved form of bridging work involves trying to influence the next generation to develop advocacy skills, and attempting to instil positive sentiment towards the oil sands industry. Strategies with increased community involvement include outsourced training programmes and entrepreneurship mentoring designed to integrate people into the workforce. This activity is aimed at building community capacity such as skills and knowledge for consultation with industry. This is partly undertaken because there was distrust expressed by community relations executives about a small number of non-aboriginal consultants and lawyers brought in by the community. Capacity is also hoped to lead to community 'sustainability' – a term used to describe economic prosperity, health and stability within the community. Education strategies seek to influence perspectives of the industry and teach empowerment and advocacy strategies. Over time, strategies became more concerned with the long term sustainability of communities and company agendas, rather than providing quick (financial) compromises to ensure that regulatory approval took place efficiently. These myopic strategies focused on individual projects and applications and not on cumulative effects, or broader communication about the industry as a whole. This is why some individuals began to speak out against the oil sands, because this type of

external bridging activity, however prevalent, did little to address cumulative environmental concerns.

It is important to note that many strategies took place concurrently. Those working for the oil sands companies perceived there to be three orientations: '*oil-sands centric*', '*community-concerned*' and '*community-centric*'. Maintenance work can be seen as not just repairing previous institutional arrangements, but incumbents developing institutional arrangements from prospective external threats. Thus, far from a restorative activity, community relations work increasingly has a future-oriented approach that aims to develop a supportive external environment. Below I consider the range of ways in which corporate actors, usually community relations executives, were able to bridge the local, operating or downstream communities within their external environment to ensure that they avoided external threats from the community.

6.3.3: Regulatory context

Regulatory context is the most crucial feature determining how a company will interact with the stakeholder group. This is because some of the communities are First Nations, and therefore they have particular regulatory conditions created by Treaty rights signed at the end of the nineteenth century, and the government's decision to pass these consultation responsibilities to corporations means that communities are particularly important stakeholders for oil sands companies. First Nations communities in Alberta have an official stake in the regulatory approval process for new oil sands extraction projects because of their treaty rights. These give indigenous people the right to continue to hunt fish and trap on their traditional territories, despite the arrival and settlement of Euro-Canadians. This was established in Canada in anticipation of oil and gas extraction, as well as to ensure the safe passage of people during the Klondike gold rush (McCormack, 2010). As a result aboriginal communities are consulted whenever there is industrial development on their traditional territories. First Nations communities were able to exert regulatory pressure, as well as being perceived as legitimate challengers to company activity as a consequence of their locality to operations, and perceived environmental wisdom (Whiteman and Cooper, 2008). Under the bearing witness logic of protest, community members projected important roles.

Below I present the range of community relations activities taking place in the oil sands region. Short, observed vignettes or quotations from interviews and field notes are offered to illuminate arrangements.

6.3.4: Investing

The windowless walls of the Headmaster's office are covered in business cards. He's new to the community. He tells me he doesn't have to ask the community before he gets in contact with companies. He calls them up to ask for requests – for a new classroom portacabin, funds for a new teacher, or to take his teaching staff out for weekly steak dinners at the workers' camps. Already morale has improved and his teachers aren't leaving; he's even had calls from people wanting to work for him. The phone rings, interrupting our interview. It's someone from an oil sands company offering his school children a trip to watch the ice hockey. He declines it politely, they've been once this year already and it's a long journey. (Fieldnote, 2011).

6.3.4.1: Chequebook diplomacy

There are three types of community investment work. Firstly, there is 'chequebook diplomacy'. Poor communities lacking funds from government sources may be particularly susceptible to "cheque book diplomacy". Some community relations executives were critical of this approach. This is particularly the case for donations towards leadership, by which I mean Chiefs and council gaining personal advantages. Examples here include skidoos, quad bikes, and cars. Whilst there is existing management literature considering corporate donations or philanthropy (Brammer and Millington, 2004, Brammer et al., 2006) this type of investment is somewhat different because there was a perception that it was given with a motive to silence or sweeten a very particular group or individual rather than improve the general reputation of the company. In this way it can be seen as a strategy aimed at deterrence because it speeds up the regulatory consultation process or discourages leadership or other community members from speaking out against a company at other times. One community relations executive told me that he saw other community relations executives flying in to communities asking "How much do we have to pay you? How do we make this go away?" When he informed one of these men that he never paid out and he stopped paying, the community became oppositional. Funding is seen as 'band aid solution', a quick fix solution that will prevent communities from organising blockades. This was a concern with those with experience from other Canadian aboriginal communities outside of

the region, where protests and blockades had been costly or stopped operations altogether. It may not change ideological differences, familiarise the community with the company or bring about societal benefits for poor communities. It is also divisive because the leadership may serve to gain disproportionately. This short term strategy is ineffectual when leadership changes hands because more money needs to be handed over. It was described as nepotism or corruption.

6.3.4.2: Agreements

Secondly, a more organised forms of funding, through 'agreements', also took place. This is more procedural and would happen in order to prevent regulatory hearings. This involves more formal agreements for large sums of money, around the times when companies are seeking new project approvals and do not wish communities to take their concerns to hearings. Sometimes it was perceived that communities stressed their environmental concerns and prolonged regulatory processes to negotiate the best financial settlement for their community. Whilst I was in the region, one small community (about two hundred and fifty people) were said to have received forty million (over the life of a project). This was seen as a particular achievement for a Metis community who did not have the same position within the regulatory system as a First Nation community that has designation as 'status' Indians. Community relations employees were encouraged to work hard to stop the regulatory approval process going to a hearing because of the expense and delays to the project. As a result private negotiations between lawyers take place with communities with treaty rights. Treaty rights are given to those who are classified as 'status' Indian, which means they belong to a First Nation and their ancestors signed a treaty in the late nineteenth century. There is on-going ambiguity about what was signed (owing in part to illiteracy of those who signed and oral history) (McCormack, 2010). Government has passed over responsibility to industry to ensure that communities are consulted before land is developed. Communities may still be passionate about maintaining their traditional lifestyle, notably around hunting, fishing and trapping in order to eat from the land, at least to supplement their other groceries. Progressive company employees see this type of investment as appropriate:

> *if the community can't realise some gain, some net benefit from that [their presence], then that's unfair, so a lot of our focus is on helping the communities, on bringing themselves up, because they had almost a third world status just half a generation ago when they were hunters and fishers and lived off the land and they*

had no roads and that and suddenly they're part of the waged economy right and there are lot of issues that that's brought to their community in terms of social issues and family dysfunction (Environmental and Social manager).

A final type of investment, described as 'hand-out' culture, involves protocols and funding events or non-political activities, money for a new nature trail, or for a tea (traditional) dance, or playground. Other types of investment include sponsorship of events, building community facilities, such as a leisure hall for young people (who are now afraid of swimming in the open lake because of pollutants in the water). This type of transactional strategy (Bowen et al 2011) relies on pragmatic and episodic exchange legitimacy (Suchman 1995). Companies face requests from community organisers, leadership and school head teachers for resources, staff perks (such as meals out) or basic infrastructure such as virtual learning facilities in portocabin style classrooms for young people without local access (by which I mean within their community or with a doable daily commute) to high school. Because government has failed to invest in these areas, and because of the complex arrangements between indigenous communities and government, band schools are sometimes very under-resourced, lacking books, good teaching staff or computers. I am told that "the companies wanted to be asked, and I wanted to be asking" (community leader). This is also the case not only for oil sands companies but the larger contracting companies that conduct outsourced work in the area. Community relations executives from larger multinational companies were concerned about repeating patterns of behaviour that they perceived as negative, with communities receiving hand-outs. There was concern that they would be perceived as just another government department, or stepping in when government lowered funding such as for local education. The strategy was also seen as disempowering and moves to co-sponsor and match fund community fundraising were being put in place. It is a shallow interaction with community members, because leadership, or possibly head teachers are likely to be the only people in contact with corporate staff. The company remains faceless, and in places financing is ambiguous. I heard a conversation amongst elders and parents about whether an oil sands company had provided funds for a cultural day; debate ensued. This suggests that the wider publicity benefits within a community may be lost from some of this activity. If donations become taken for granted, rather than rare gifts, the reputational benefits for companies may also be negated. The risk with this strategy is that it creates dependency and expectation that companies will step in without the need for action from the community. The companies risk becoming understood as a form of government support.

6.3.4.3: Kickbacks

Another related form of hand out is the 'kickback'. This does not come from the company to the community directly. The company is put under pressure to select contractors who have ties with aboriginal communities. Companies can be joint venture or community or First Nation owned. But in situations where communities do not have the capacity for such enterprises, communities may prearrange with a small contractor to receive a percentage of the profits in return for endorsing this small company. This also allows the company to demonstrate that it has 'local content' which is a procurement consideration. The community then puts pressure on the oil sands company to use this contractor. This company however may be more expensive, to allow for the profit skimming. This provides communities with another form of hand-out or revenue generating situation in which money is given for their regulatory position and geography rather than for work.

6.3.5: Introducing and relationships

A perceived alternative to 'chequebook diplomacy' culture and a way of smoothing the regulatory approval process is relationship building. Money is still likely to be given, but the company seeks to have more representation 'on the ground'. These strategies were not criticised by those working for progressive companies although it was stressed by one manager that activities needed to have 'substance' and not be superficial. Equally one industry association employee was critical of a small company "for running around getting Indians to sign agreements", suggesting that they did not have the time to get to know community members, but only superficially connected with them in order to ensure that their approval process was conducted successfully. She considered this to be a self-serving strategy. However, the vast majority of oil sands operations are conducted by large multinational companies. Introductions were seen as particularly important before any formal regulatory process was started on a new project. The metaphor of a 'door' was often used, showing the boundary between the company and the community. Power differences between community and companies were also demonstrated by pointing out that community members would not turn up unannounced in Calgary (the city home to most oil sands companies).

Relationship building was seen as key to the success of a development. There was a perception that relationships were sometimes useful in and of themselves. This is particularly the case 'should any issues arise' for example a small-scale environmental issue such as light pollution or an odour. This strategy acknowledges that there may be issues or

impacts but stresses that previously formed relationships will limit animosity. This relational strategy can at times appear hollow, however. It does not acknowledge the strategic intent of the corporation; the analogy of the neighbour is flawed because a neighbour would not typically demand your garden or livelihood, or change your entire neighbourhood because of a transitional workforce who bring fast money, a high proportion of uneducated men away from their families who are not used to money (and sadly prostitutes, hard drugs and alcohol). Relationship building can be about company staff drinking coffee, or sharing fish caught locally. This is about demonstrating trust through the embodiment of the company employee, by emulating the role of the neighbour.

It was also stressed that relationship building activity could act as containment work if a complaint or issue arose in the future because community members would be more likely to turn to the company. This also involves the need for direct conversation away from lawyers or fear of legal repercussions. The regulator, the ERCB, was also aware of the need to build better relationships in order to better manage the complaints or issues process. This was particularly the case because issues are often cumulative and also hard to attribute to a particular company (for example a bad smell). This is one of the reasons that companies were increasingly looking to collaborate with each other. Communities are constituent groups within the institutional arenas because of their regulatory, normative and cognitive influence (Zietsma and Lawrence, 2010). As a result they invest resources in responding to their demands and developing some channels to share these privately. Particular skill sets and the professionalization of community relations were required for this approach. Aboriginal relations had been a key activity from the early days of Syncrude beginning oil sands mining, largely because of the values of the much-cherished CEO at this time. This was much easier to establish when there were few companies and few communities in the region. Relationships were built in part because of the need for employees in the expanding industry.

6.3.6: Instructing

Programmes are provided by the industry as a way of developing capacity, contributing to healthy community and stopping 'social barriers' from preventing employment. The provision of courses, or 'programmes', has become big business, as oil companies outsource this work. They may be related to helping people gain employment, adult education, which is important because of the low high school graduation rates caused by poor educational provision, collective and personal memories of Residential schooling abuse, and people

having families at a young age (observation and interviews). They also addressed social issues, such as the need for parenting training. This is a more personal form of transactional involvement with the community, because it is relaying training to develop skills. Several reservations were expressed to me by community relations executives about this approach. One was that although companies had spent large sums of money on courses, results were not showing, as a consequence of low completion rates. This was attributed to low locus of control and agency involved in deciding to take courses. Another executive cautioned on the dangers of imposing courses that executives themselves considered interesting or useful, rather than allowing decisions to be made elsewhere. This reveals the risk of moving away from 'superficial' forms of involvement, to imposing one's vision on the community.

6.3.7: Integration

Employment-related activity aims to integrate aboriginal people into the workforce. This activity ranges from leadership or business level relationship development to more educational activity within the community. As with each of these strategies, there is overlap with other activities. Employment was a concern for the first pioneering mining companies who were concerned about finding enough workers adjusted to living and working in the cold Northern Alberta winters. Some of these communities now have prosperous business interests in the oil sands as a result of these early partnerships. One chief in particular is publically heralded as a success story that other First Nations should emulate because of their financial development. Employment is a crucial part of integrating local communities in to the institution. It is often described as 'Local Content' because this is a concern for companies and in procurement procedures, local capacity (meaning capacity to work with the industry) and local opportunities or stakeholder economic opportunities.

> *So in part it's self-serving, but in part it's we're trying to find ways that will work both for ourselves and our communities, because through the best of intentions, and I really truly do believe, in my heart, the oil sands companies have really tried, erm, a great interest in making a step change. When communities have said all our people are on social systems, we needs jobs, we have really worked hard with communities to create those jobs. The challenge is that the results don't show (Community Relations Manager).*

This is because it stops or lessens the need for hand-outs, ensures that communities benefit from continued expansion, and therefore discourages them from opposing projects (although it does not ensure that it stops them). It is assumed that even the most supportive Chief of a First Nation with many millions of dollars of business interest will still be a critical and

important stakeholder but that business interests leads to close collaboration and therefore an ability to manage these issues mutually (reputation manager). It also means that challenges can be more easily understood on both sides of the boundary because interests are aligned and relationships well-established.

Some of this training was outsourced. However I was introduced to a 'stakeholder economic opportunities' executive at one company and it seems highly likely that this role exists in other similar companies. Health and safety and quality are key concerns for procuring contractors, and some of the companies have been working with aboriginal companies to help them improve these aspects. However, one community relations executive describes his job as 'expectation management'. First Nations communities also had economic opportunities staff.

More established mining companies were involved in apprenticeships. There was difficulty in insisting that high school education had been carried out. But, there were also issues with allowing people entry on to apprenticeships because it was encouraging young people to leave school early to train, or to see schooling as less important. This angered some individuals. There are many barriers to direct employment with a multinational oil sands company because they require a high school diploma, no criminal record and drugs tests to be passed. The industry was beginning to consider how to work to overcome these 'barriers'. There is a tendency to describe corporate involvement activity as opportunities, benefits or capacity. Whilst opposition to the industry's presence was rarely mentioned, social barriers stopping the success of industry opportunity efforts (or 'interventions') were frequently mentioned to explain the circumstances that explained company activity and lack of successful 'output'.

The ways in which companies engage with communities to employ them varies markedly. Young people were particularly attractive and often given jobs locally or apprenticeships to learn a trade, or even sent to headquarter offices abroad. The community relations executive recognised that these gap year students were likely to go to university and not remain in the company but funded the trip and training. Business capacity development was the big agenda. This involved training programmes, driver's licences, first aid programmes and safety standards training. Some individuals saw themselves as coaches.

Infrastructure had developed to support economic opportunities activity such as local opportunity centres, to advertise jobs to individuals, or business incubators to facilitate business development. I was told that it was explicitly communicated that a local opportunities centre was a consultation free zone, recognising people's concern that being involved might be seen as complying or supporting the presence of future or current projects.

> *in small communities grade 12 graduates are at a premier. That's just the reality of it. Small communities, small graduating classes. You can make a commentary if you wish. But one of the young ladies that we had took a summer placement and as it happened we promoted one of our community people that year XXX has come on as a full time employee. [...] I knew she's going to school in the fall, I sent a group of them down actually. So we capture that ... and say ok come and work for Statoil and she is our receptionist at the centre for opportunities. So we use those kind of tools. My goal is that we should have at least one [company] truck going home to every community in Alberta (Community Relations Manager).*

Employment integrates aboriginal community members into the industry. This is a mutually beneficial strategy for both the individual and the company, who are looking for employees and can lower the risk of public opposition if community members are co-opted into employment. This then is an example of both influencing the local community and complying to a particular stakeholder demand (Oliver, 1991). It is also a form of manipulation because employing individuals gives the company an opportunity to change the ways in which the individuals and communities feel about the oil sands, and their particular company, through socialising them with the industry.

6.3.8: Instilling

> *The little girl steps in front of her class. The photographer takes multiple shots for the industry association website. As planned, they have chosen the prettiest, smallest child for the role of enacting oil during the classroom performance of the oil sands extraction process. Her schoolmates aged four through to eighteen, clap enthusiastically just as they've been instructed to do so. Their teachers for the day arrived that morning in a convoy of white rental pickups hired by the industry association. They work for the industry-sponsored education organization that teaches energy literacy and environmental stewardship. The most excitable cheers come from the back of the room where the corporate volunteers, wearing the programme t shirt over their shirts, observe the performance. The CEO of a small*

oil sands company, standing next to his wife, whoops and claps rigorously (Field note, 2011).

Embedding or investing within the community can be seen as stepping up to address societal issues that government has either ignored or failed to solve, such as education inequalities and addiction. However, this brings corporate involvement into primary/elementary classrooms or into other areas of community life in which they would not previously have been present. This influences future generations as well as making it difficult to avoid corporate reach. It also means that the companies have the opportunity, even if they may currently not actually do this, to threaten to remove investment, contracts or other forms of involvement if they do not like the community's stance. A story amongst oppositional stakeholders was repeated to me about how a CEO of an oil company had threatened the leadership of a First Nation with financial consequences if they did not 'rein in' a government and industry relations employee who was using his holiday/vacation time to attend AGMs and act as a spokesperson for NGO/contestation activity.

Firstly, the responses are not accurate once we better understand who the constituent groups are in this heterogeneous and pluralistic environment. This is especially the case when the 'local' element to much of this extra-organizational activity is considered.

"So I think to me that's part of this whole you've got to be careful of that it's not brainwashing, that you've not cherry picking the dance to give you some profile and get your name in the paper but at the end of the day it doesn't have a lot of substance to it, right, so you need to make sure that your programme has substance and follow through and part of our effort you know is to put in a programme that then we can eventually step back from that will run for itself right"(Environmental and Stakeholder Manager).

6.3.9: Inspiring

The elders and adults sit around the table indignantly recalling the scene to each other. They tried to get into the school to find out what their children were doing with company executives. They are turned away. The school don't have to ask permission for an activity that is taking place within the school day; it's not a field trip. They are annoyed "It's divide and rule" says one of them. "I won't let my son get involved until I know what it's about" (Fieldnote, 2011).

The most involved form of maintenance activity with the community involved inspiring young people and community members not connected to the industry by developing methods to mobilize individuals. This was developed through the new normative network established by some actors within the industry in conjunction with a university. This also represents a shift away from leadership relations, and community-concerned activity towards 'community-centric' activity involving a coalition of companies, that leads to not only building connections, but also mobilizing the community:

> *"We want to focus on the grassroots. Mobilizing people mobilizing kids to be able to... here.... we know we are going to be successful when anybody in a community can advocate for themselves, identify the resources that they need and can make it happen. That's what we're interested in doing. That's empowerment" (Community Relations Manager).*

Fundamental efforts to facilitate this were around education, through outsourced training, apprenticeships, providing facilities for the formal education of young people, partnering with a university. This was for a number of reasons. Education was seen as an 'access point' into communities because parents wanted their children to have economic opportunity and choice facilitated by education (community members). People wanted the best for their children.

> *" I'd like to be able to think we are doing that [building a trusting relationship and balancing power], getting our hands dirty if you will, with the community people. And er working on some things that are really important to them. It's not necessarily as primarily important to oil sands companies immediately"(Community Relations Manager).*

Furthermore, there was real need for educational improvements because communities were often lacking high school provision. This meant that children had in the past been 'billeted' to live in Fort McMurray at the age of thirteen. Many children became homesick and missed their communities; children dropped out of school and returned home. This sometimes led to antisocial behaviour such as drinking, graffiti or vandalism. But the oil sands development had expanded Fort McMurray into an expensive 'boomtown' with associated social problems, such as prostitution and easy access to drugs and alcohol, and a large population of young transient male workers, making it an intimidating place even for a well-travelled, street-wise female researcher. Furthermore, in two (very different) aboriginal communities I was told that school teachers had autonomy to interact with the industry to request investment or perks from companies or to determine activities within the school day, and thus to invite industry members into the school notwithstanding opposition from

community leaders. Educating young people, through activities such as 'influencer training' was hoped to empower young people so that this would make it easier for the industry to have compliance, or at least manageable opposition from communities in the future. The coalition activity was particularly future-oriented.

> *"If you think about the relationship that any industry has with a community, think ten, twenty years into the future. Those children that we are focusing on now will be the future leaders of this community, so it's in part it's very self-serving on our part because we're investing in that right now. It doesn't necessarily have to be industry friendly, however, erm if you have ninety percent of children that you know who are not graduating from high school, that are choosing unhealthy lifestyles, erm more than half of whom will spend time in jail, and those are people you're going to negotiate at the table in 15 years, who would you rather have at the table negotiating" (Community Relations Manager).*

This also demonstrates that there was industry oriented-motivation for the coalition activity. The other aim of this embedding and education strategy is to influence (retrain) the companies working within the coalition, as well as the industry to change their patterns of behaviour away from trying to buy off communities with corporate investment, either as part of the formal consultation process or in gifts on meeting leaders. One Community Relations Executive stated that:

> *"But as a rule, if everyone is patterned to behave that way, that's how they're going to behave [through handouts], unless there is a new way to be patterned. Erm and we all invest in it, together, you see that's the trick" (Community Relations Executive).*

In this way they are hoping to adapt institutional arrangements, through other companies mimicking behaviour to stop hand-out culture. In moving towards a 'community mentor or facilitator' role these participating companies are continuing to reassert themselves in leadership positions which whilst benevolent, are still powerful elites which safeguard the maintenance of their institutions, both the oil sands as a whole, and in the role of community relations executive. This could be under threat as companies question the utility of community donations and programmes when "the results don't show" (interview with Community Relations Executive). Therefore community relations executives have tried a number of ways, through the rationale of capacity development, to address social issues and requests within the communities, as well as to further embed themselves in new ways to educate community members. They hope that this will mobilize them to become advocates for their own interests, and better hold government to account. This represents a strategy to influence community members and alter the local institutional pressures on the oil sands

industry.

6.3.9.1: Communities – providing 'band aid' solutions

At the company level whilst there was a lot of activity to appease communities, this activity was focused very specifically around making sure that regulatory approval could take place efficiently. There have been two dominant approaches to dealing with local aboriginal communities. Firstly, some companies have only engaged with First Nations communities, rather than all aboriginal communities because these people have regulatory roles, whereas Metis or non-Status Indians do not.

Secondly, strategies have varied. Some companies, especially smaller companies without the same resources or reputational risks, or those with employees with minimal experience, were using "chequebook diplomacy". Progressive companies stress that there is a need to find balance between concern for the environment and economic benefits for the community (Community Relations Manager). Consultation is the regulatory process that communities are obliged to engage with. This is often described metaphorically as 'the table' (A38 and others). Communities feel under pressure at this point because the environmental and social assessments produced at this phase are extremely large and technical. They also have to respond to multiple companies. One IRC described having to work with two hundred separate projects. Furthermore, apart from a basic sum of money provided by government, funding comes from companies which limit the research and consultation capacity of the community's IRC.

6.3.9.2: Consultation

Companies are obliged to consult with communities as part of the regulatory approval process. They are also required to consider social impacts as part of their environmental impact assessment. Treaty Rights stipulate that communities have a right to be consulted on when their traditional territories are being developed and their traditional way of life - their right to hunt, fish and trap - is at risk. Government has passed on this right to companies who must demonstrate that they have consulted before approval is granted by regulators. An IRC employee told me that the community "were like a ping pong ball, they push us back and forth" because the government has passed over its responsibility to companies. As a result communities have to engage with multiple highly resourced companies at any one time. I am told that "This government just doesn't really care about first nation people"

(Industry Relations Director). A community might be dealing with up to 200 projects (Industry Relations Director).

A small amount of funding for consultation activity is given by the government, and then additional money is given by the company that the community is negotiating with. They must take the money in order to engage in the consultation process which they are obliged to be involved in:

> *"it's very difficult for us to refuse consultation because we also have to do the duty of consultation on behalf of the first nation so it's not like go away we don't want to talk to you because then they can easily accuse us of not being fair and responsive in working with them so it's almost like we're forced to kind of take what they offer and you know it's not enough but at the same time we say we can only do this you can't expect us to do more although we'd like to do much more for community, the funding that you're providing is only allowing us to do this, so that's kind of the situation we put the company in and a lot of times they only want to do the bare minimum" (Industry Relations Director).*

For Metis communities their funding is even more minimal because they do not have the same regulatory influence as First Nations communities. Consultation investment and capacity building is minimal because it is not in the interests of the companies and their continued expansion to invest in a process that could provide tools, such as research, that would allow communities to be more powerful and more able to contest their on-going or future activity.

Bridging activity is only invested in highly when it benefits a company's ability to continue to work and expand within the region through direct benefits such as employees, or through softening community attitudes towards the industry. Companies embark on consultation activity and log records of this in order to prove (if necessary) later in the regulatory hearing that communities have been consulted. This is because it is perceived that communities try to stop new projects in two main ways. The first is to say they have environmental concerns, and the second is to say that they were not appropriately consulted. As a result of this activity, Industry Relations Corporations, sometimes known as government and industry departments or regional action committees (if the community is predominantly Metis and not First Nation) have emerged. These are groups of people, often not from the community, who work on the legal, technical and engagement side of the consultation activity for the community. Depending on the community this may relate to stressing environmental

concerns that the community has, and is acting as an secondary order of environmental standards, as well as negotiating the best financial settlement for the community. Communities have never stopped an approval. This may be because if a project was unlikely to be granted approval a company would pull out before the vast expenses of a hearing, but the community feels this gives them no real choice in the face of projects. All their activity is a compromise because projects will take place regardless of their stance.

6.3.10: Discussion

This study shows a number of ways that community stakeholders are managed and influenced in order to maintain the status quo of the industry. Company community relations executives are the dominant actors in the interaction between companies and communities and seek to monopolise the symbol system (Dacin et al. 2010; Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Underpinning the reproduction or transmission of institutions are power inequalities (Dacin et al. 2010).

Previous studies exploring maintenance work have focused on how elite actors are able to repair the status quo (Micelotta and Washington, 2013). This study is able to demonstrate how maintenance work also allows for the advancement and expansion of an industry, even in the face of contestation. Community relations have previously been thought of as a public affairs function and an activity for corporate communications and the consumption of wider publics and, whilst this is the case for some activities, the OSLI coalition and the individual companies in this coalition had developed private relational space away from public scrutiny to develop relations and create new committees and activities to change the way in which community members thought and advocated for their communities (such as with the school board when cuts were announced). This work was done with very limited public communication about activities, and the agreement that the community decision-making organization would be shown any public communications first. This advocacy and influencer training was aimed at empowering people, especially the young, to advocate change but within formal processes and in ways that stressed co-operation and solution-based change.

Truly transformational style engagement, as depicted by Bowen et al. (2010) is extremely difficult when one side of the relationship has all the power and choice. Communities, because of their geography and regulatory roles (if First Nations) cannot choose to opt out of change. Companies have resources, networks, highly skilled and educated staff members

in the arrangement. More partnership or collaborative styles of working are employed, which give the companies greater influence and access in communities, but this does not quite get beyond the transactional orientation of the company providing something, it just leads to deeper engagement with sections of the community and is delivered with more sensitivity and with more relational interaction.

In response to limited but high profile challenges to the oil sands industry from prominent indigenous activists, and relatively low levels of success at changing local community dynamics, corporate community relations executives further involved themselves in the community, embedding themselves through collaborative, cross-industry activities designed to 'educate' people to empower them to become advocates for social change to address social barriers (such as addiction, violence and criminality) whilst also developing 'capacity'. Far from giving out balloons and free computers, as was the case with the public affairs oriented community relations of the past (Burke 1999, Kemp 2009), progressive companies were hoping to introduce community members into the formal wage economic, through 'economic opportunities', developing consultation expertise and leadership skills that would create long-term supportive local conditions for the industry.

Trust and access increase, as do attempts to influence the ways in which people think about the industry, rather than just containing their animosity and concern about change with hand-outs or chequebook diplomacy that can deter the voicing of worries as a result of coercion. Compromise (in the form of investing, introducing and instructing) and more embedding and influencing responses, similar to what Oliver (1991) describes as manipulation (in the form of integrating, instilling and inspiring) are likely when constituent groups are highly legitimate for regulatory or normative reasons. They are similar constructs in that they seek to find common ground and build relationships and they have a position that appears collaborative, positive and mutually beneficial. It is often difficult to challenge; those lacking resources often sought the benefits provided (Ansari et al., 2012). Manipulation is the most active strategy because it seeks to influence, thus actively changing the stakeholder group or exerting power over the content of the expectations or the sources of pressure.

Compromise and manipulation are likely responses to issues when the constituent group is considered legitimate, either because of normative or regulatory positions. Compromise is possible when there are regulatory pressures that force the corporation to find common

ground or accede to some of the community's wishes. This tends to mean that compromise takes place at the project/company level. Manipulation is more possible when regulation is not a factor, and when companies have developed coalitions that seek to work to improve their legitimacy and relationships. Manipulation usually involves activities away from environmental concerns, and tends to be based around added benefits. This takes place at the coalition building and institutional ties level. It is important to stress the way in which companies have combined forces to share best practices as well as to work to combat general public perception issues about oil sands as a whole. This could be seen as an unintended consequence of opponents focusing on the category of oil sands rather than particular companies because the industry has coalesced; it became a far less fragmented group of companies in which the trade association is very proactive at communicating, and the 'progressive' companies have banded together to develop faster. A consequence of a centralised organizational field is that it is harder to challenge (Pache and Santos, 2010).

Environmental issues are linked to the core technical operations of a company, whereas social benefits tend to be add-ons to company practice. It is easier to add on additional support and boundary spanning employees in this area than to address cumulative environmental concerns.

6.3.10.1: Conclusions

Community relations work, which could be considered compromise, co-optation and manipulation in Oliver's (1991) typology, is based on episodic, pragmatic legitimacy (Suchman 1995). This means that it was based around project agreements, motivated by the community's proximity to the industry and regulatory power. This often involved a short term strategy to influence communities to submit to organization's current project ambitions.

Although the industry was established, oil sands extraction was a relatively new development. It started in 1968 and expanded quickly in the early 2000s. As a result, those in the energy industry had a blind spot towards the liability of newness (Suchman 1995; Stinchcombe, 1968). For them, the industry was not new. They were an established, prosperous mature industry in a province that had been founded on oil. The industry had their own legitimating myths, developed since the early pioneers of the oil industry. They had lost sight of their external environment. In the past, I am told, people were only concerned with the price of oil at the gas station, and whether the gas station had toilets or

sold tobacco. Oil had become a taken-for-granted product which was necessary for daily life and its origins were undistinguishable at the petrol pump. Perhaps because of the familiarity of people in the region with small scale oil and gas, the industry stakeholder employees' familiarity with sour gas (which is deadly) and the conservativeness of the province's citizens, it seems that those working in the oil sands industry were caught by surprise when their industry became the model microcosm case study for international environmental groups discussing climate change, indigenous rights and new forms of unconventional oil being exploited by 'Big Oil'. Whilst they were maintaining some pragmatic legitimacy in their local aboriginal communities, even this was beginning to crumble. This was either because of increased industry expansion causing communities to worry about the impacts on their traditional territories, or because particular communities saw other nearby communities becoming wealthy as a result of the negotiations and agreements made between the First Nations and their oil sands companies.

6.4: Responding to soft advocacy: The formation of a new organisation

This section describes one of the major collective responses to stakeholder pressure. A group of oil sands companies who perceived themselves as leaders with progressive values established a collaboration. The organisation, the Oil Sands Leadership Initiative, was loosely formed initially. Following multi-million dollar investments and a couple of years later, the organisation became a legal entity. Predominantly it was designed to improve the performance of the industry. It had many advantages for those companies wishing to maintain the status quo of the oil sands in the face of societal concern. It came about as a consequence of societal pressure, concern about avoiding regulation and the failure of the trade association to bring together companies to collaborate.

Rao and Kenney (2008) assert that varying degrees of contestation cause the development of new organisational forms. Stinchcombe (1968; 194) recognised that the creation of a new organisational form is "pre-eminently a political phenomenon". Typically this is thought to take place between organisations with differing levels of power and ideology. In this instance, the companies that collaborated to form a new organisation were relatively similar; large multinational oil companies working in the oil sands region with 'progressive' values. These actors had the least asymmetry of power and were highly ideologically compatible (Rao and Kenney, 2008). There appeared to be little contestation amongst participating groups, who wanted to respond to institutional pressures.

6.4.1: Why was it established?

The settlement organisation was set up as a consequence of four issues. Firstly as a response to societal pressure around environmental and social impacts caused by the oil sands. Secondly, there was a dynamic tension caused by companies wishing to improve their environmental performance whilst increasing production. Thirdly, executives recognised that there was a need for collective response because stakeholders did not differentiate based on brand (issue manager). Furthermore, the trade association, which was considered the original vehicle for collaboration, was unable to adapt.

6.4.1.1: As a response to societal 'soft advocacy'

The context is summarised by one interviewee, a former environmental manager and consultant:

> Interviewee: "Now you get a situation where people say it's unacceptable for you not to contribute to society. It's unacceptable for you companies to continue to negatively impact the environment in the way that you are. So smart companies, or more enlightened, maybe they're not smart, more enlightened companies are going "you know there is something to this". Let's step up! Let's work together on solutions, ahead of regulations. So go back to the issue now. So now we go back to the issue of when we create things we run into issues with conflict with the regulations. It used to be that regulations drove change, mostly around safety and health. Now it's industry because of advocacy, we'll call soft advocacy from society, broader stakeholders. Individual stakeholders no. Broader ones yes."

> Charlotte: "So tell me what you mean about broader stakeholders?"

> Interviewee:" So it's society in general. It's the message that people are getting from society in general. As opposed to a specific stakeholder group or advocacy group. It's because an industry or an organisation probably isn't going to change their behaviour based on a single First Nation. Or group of First Nations. Or based on some folks in one jurisdiction as a stakeholder group. But, when you get everybody together humming the quasi same tune, then organisations sort of pay attention" (Former Environmental Manager and Consultant).

The consultant felt that "soft advocacy" driven by "society in general" was leading to firms' awareness of the need to make environmental and societal improvement. It would be too

simplistic to state that this organisation emerged directly as a consequence of stakeholder demands. It was a response to employees recognising the challenges to their legitimacy to operate in the regions, i.e. "we think our social licence to operate is in jeopardy" (issue manager). Companies banded together to form a settlement to address the issues raised by others. The organisation was set up to tackle contentious issues and to try to ensure that companies retained their power in terms of deciding on how to address issues. The organisation served to influence perceptions of the industry as a whole and position these companies as most innovative. The organisation was able to demonstrate compliance to environmental and social concern as well as economic pursuits, subtly influence (possibly even police) its laggard competitors and members embedded themselves in public life, such as by attending the university or working more intensely with the community, because representatives were less driven by the day-to-day demands of their company.

6.4.1.2: Lowering risk of being targeted

Corporate executives were also concerned about behaving too differently from their counterparts because they did not want to risk drawing attention to their company and becoming a direct target of social movement actors. The oil sands as a whole were being targeted and redefined negatively, and not specific companies. Individual companies could do little to influence these new cultural definitions being applied to the oil sands by their critics on their own. Consequently, one new pioneering employee, newly back in industry having worked for the government for several years and soon to retire, discussed the industry's problems with his two close friends from other oil sands companies, and proposed that they set up a leadership initiative. The companies agreed and six companies came on board[30]. They considered themselves progressive and like-minded (Environmental Manager). The companies formed working groups around the key areas that had challenges: *water, land, sustainable community* and *technology breakthrough* (innovation). These were the main areas of opposition to the oil sands and drawn up as areas of concern during the coalition's first meeting. They also set up stakeholder and communications working groups. They positioned themselves around performance and collaboration and creating social, environmental and economic benefits (Issue Manager).

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[30] The merger between PetroCanada and Suncor reduced this to five companies. At the time of writing a sixth company, Shell, had joined the coalition.

6.4.1.3: Failure of trade association

The trade association was proactively communicating about the industry through a high profile advertising campaign, but there was disagreement because the trade association was not specific to oil sands in Alberta, but represented the oil and gas industry across the country. These other companies were small, and did not work in the Oil Sands region. The six oil sands companies that founded OSLI were said to fund roughly half the budget of the trade association, Canadian Association Petroleum Producers (CAPP).

The trade association had attempted to work on issues and performance. CAPP had a regional sustainability initiative but some of its members wanted to limit the work taking place. The larger progressive companies intended to raise the bar in terms of the sustainability work they were doing, but some of the smaller players:

> *"started to water things down and say, yeah, we're not going there, we're not doing that, to break the vision, but because of the long tail of the organisation [the small oil and gas companies across Canada], the big players [who work in oil sands] who were the ones that come to the table, contribute the time, contribute most of the money, because CAPP's revenues are based on production, they [the small companies] just wanted to lower the bar, and we wanted to raise the bar" (Issue Manager).*

OSLI was "born out of that" desire to improve oil sands performance (Issue Manager). They felt they could not do this because CAPP involved too much bureaucracy and too many players. This represents the failure of a trade association where agreements are difficult to negotiate and coordination of producers becomes problematic (Rao et al., 2000).

6.4.2: A new organisation form

This led to the need for oil sands companies to respond to the increased public scrutiny around issues and the "dynamic tension" caused by the need to make major environmental improvements whilst vastly increasing production. A new organisation was conceived by three friends who worked in similar roles across the industry:

> *"When I got my job offer and I sat down with two old friends, one of whom is my counterpart at [major company], and said how can we possibly reconcile this? We have got to find a way to push the envelope of performance and change the way that we do things. So we started this thing, the three of us conceived this thing" (Issue Manager).*

The individuals were quickly able to persuade those more senior than themselves to invest in the project. In time the coalition became a distinct legal organisational entity. They sought to maintain the status quo, and bring about field-level change that was best for companies.

6.4.2.1: Stepping out of routine

Employees had particular company pressures and communications styles that they had to abide by. OSLI was set up privately with very little communication. This in itself was a deliberate strategy of its founders. Executives working in Alberta were geared towards short-term project goals. Those working at the boundary edge of the firm, in stakeholder and environmental management roles particularly were focused on successfully getting new projects agreed, or maintaining relations with immediate provincial stakeholders. In the coalition, stakeholders and issues were determined by the group of company representatives "subjectively" (Issue Manager). Working groups were established around the issues that the progressive companies deemed most salient. Working in a coalition allowed for "blue sky thinking" (Environmental Manager) and freed them to think without restriction about the sector and not just about their daily work (Environmental Manager). This allowed for innovation to be discussed, pilots to be established, and for cross industry norms and issues to be addressed.

6.4.2.2: Improving performance

OSLI was described as "performance-squared times communication". The industry previously spent money on communication but not on collaborating on innovation and technology. It was said that they realised that communication alone would not improve their reputation "it doesn't matter how much communication you do if this [performance] is still zero" (Issue Manager). Consequently a number of working groups were set up to address technical improvements such as land, water and technology breakthrough. They saw themselves as solution focused and working in a collaborative way allowed them less restriction than during their daily project-focused work (Environmental Manager). They felt they were working "with no ceiling" (Environmental Manager). I am told that they gained quick wins for the companies, such as sharing best practice as well as providing training. It has also allowed them to build infrastructure for innovating such as a water treatment technology centre.

Experimenting outside of their company project pressures allowed for the speeding up of institutionalisation and innovation. This took place with regard to building deeper relationships and embedding the oil companies within communities, as well as tackling environmental problems that industry, community and environmentalists all recognised. In the water working group, they established a water treatment technology centre. This helped to speed up implementation of new technologies because it provided a cross-company facility to test new technology. This meant that it did not slow down projects and risk "muck[ing] it up to create a pilot facility" (Environmental Manager). The initiative allowed best practice, language and relationships to be shared between companies. In this way it could be said to have sped up institutionalization of the organisational field. Further, it allowed for new projects to develop that were more embedded within local aboriginal communities. In a nutshell, it allowed employees to move from needing to gain episodic legitimacy, to long-term continual forms of legitimacy (Suchman 1995).

6.4.2.3: Establishing shared language and facts

As well as sharing conversation and best practice that developed a shared language, they also actively worked to 'establish facts' (Environmental and Stakeholder Manager) that could be agreed upon across the partners. They did this in "quiet conversation" with a regional moderate NGO (Environmental and Stakeholder Manager).

> *"...here's a set of facts that the public can use to make some decisions, and the government can use to make some decisions right." (Environmental and Stakeholder Manager).*

This shows that they were attempting to work together to bridge the differences between their understanding of the industry and the perceptions spread by the radical environmentalists which had raised different ideas about the industry which had turned 'oil sands' into a hot topic (Rao, 2009). The oil sands, rather than the oil and gas industry in general, was "under the microscope" (Environmental and Stakeholder Manager). This was based on a realist epistemological belief that science is rational and not open to interpretation and that if people knew 'the facts' they would agree with their perspective and join a "facts-based dialogue" (Environmental and Stakeholder Manager).

6.4.2.4: Aligning interests and identities

This organisation is an example of a field-level settlement (Rao and Kenney, 2008). A settlement is an organisational form that emerges as a consequence of a 'truce' in field-level contestation between different constituent groups (Rao and Kenney, 2008). These

settlements develop when relations and responses to constituent groups are routinized. They are also developed when one or more organisations, in this case companies extracting oil sands, would benefit from separating this activity from their own particular activities. Typically settlements are thought of to be coming together from across an organisational field. However in this case, the radical environmentalists and aboriginal actors who raised issues and publically denigrated 'tar sands' were not willing to cooperate with companies. The aim of the non-government organisations was to raise an agenda, such as raising issues with oil sands especially around water, land and aboriginal communities, and to push provincial government to more heavily regulate the industry. These radical social movement actors were not willing to collaborate with companies because of the risk of co-optation and loss of their voice (interview with Environmentalist). The company executives acknowledged that there were environmental problems and wished to respond to 'broader societal stakeholders'. In forming this settlement organisation, the companies involved were able to claim an unfilled resources space (Rao and Kenney, 2008; Zald and McCarthy, 1980). In doing this, the company executives (working in issue management, environmental and stakeholder roles) created their own relational space (Gamson, 1996; Kellogg, 2010). Settlements are typically understood to take place when different groups within the organisational field cooperate (Rao and Kenney, 2008). In contrast, this settlement was formed when other field level organisations and groups, specifically the radical environmental groups were not willing to collaborate.

> *"It was, it started out and still is an experiment because nowhere in the world in any industry has there been the type of collaboration, I've looked I've checked there are other organisations and companies will work together on a project but this is about working across broadly all aspects, so whether it's environment, whether it's social or whether it's economic. And it's difficult too, because these are competitors, so that's one of the issues, so it was the brainchild of a few people [….] and they started talking and working this out and it has all been done up until this point on a hand shake. A good faced hand shake. No up until now, other than the charter, which says we will do this this and this and strive to achieve this this and this, there is no other ... it's we want two million bucks from you! OK! I mean that's unheard of"* (Issue Management Consultant).

Companies were described as "partners" (Environmental Manager). A number of metaphors were harnessed to conceptualise this collaboration, which started out as informal but with high stakes (including financial). The metaphor of 'the table' was used frequently to describe the collaboration itself. Below is an illustration:

> *"[my boss] was at the table right from the beginning basically because he has a long history with [executive] who is vice president of sustainability at [oil*

> *company] and knows some of the players so he was at the table" (Issue Management Consultant).*

Another metaphor was used by one of the founding members of the coalition to describe the collaborative efforts of competitors by involving a soccer game. I was told that unlike other industries, because the price of oil is not set by them, and project leases were granted for up to thirty years, the companies were not like typical industry rivals and did not wish "to drive each other into the ground" (Issue Manager). One issue manager described them as like a sports league. He felt that the initiative had advantages in attracting, retaining and motivating staff and that being a good citizen gave you competitive advantage on people "which is all we compete on" (Issue Manager).

6.4.2.4.1: New identities

They were also able to project new identities as those working for companies understood themselves to be the real change agents with concerns about the environment because they were willing to seek solutions. Whilst some employees saw attendance as a hassle (issue manager) for some individuals the coalition aligned with their personal identities and lifestyles and allowed them to perceive themselves as rightful moral change agents (Wright et al., 2012). Their action began to mirror the environmentalists in that they became an alliance, just as the range of NGOs had collaborated to make "strange bedfellows" (issue manager). This had a wide number of advantages for the companies involved and motivated the company representatives who spoke passionately about the project.

6.4.2.5: Simultaneously bridging and protecting

OSLI was not "public-facing". The coalition was private but allowed for a collapse of traditional boundaries between company executives. This helped strengthen their core. This type of bridging, connecting with those most like them, allowed for an improvement of their technical core as well as strengthening their collective identity. This meant that in some ways it was easier to talk about than their companies, because it was not disclosing company secrets, and they were less tied to corporate headquarters, which may have had a different orientation because of the multinational home country's values and priorities. When they worked for OSLI they were less constrained. It also ended concerns about radical environmentalists targeting a particular company, which had led to concerns about innovating beyond complying with other companies. They were also given some privacy because they had individual companies and the trade association acting as the industry communicators. This could be used as a concealing tactic (Oliver, 1991). The organisation

enabled them to successfully bridge with other actors, for example local government actors, MBA students, or potential influencers such as entrepreneurs and rock stars.

6.4.2.6: Boundary Redefinition

The creation of this organisation also led to a new boundary definition. This created a group of companies that were categorised based on oil sands. It also placed them in the position of leaders or change agents. This form of settlement acts as defining work. They develop an organisation that creates new boundaries and hierarchy within the field and allows them to describe themselves as 'change agents' and 'leaders' driving innovation (Consultant, Issue Manager) (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). This is activity typically associated with the creation of a new institution. Here this aims to maintain the status quo of a relatively new industrial practice that is newly categorised by its opponents as 'tar sands' rather than 'oil and gas' or 'energy'.

The organisation effectively distanced itself from those involved in their day-to-day commercial endeavours to focus on sharing solutions to pertinent issues. This also provided them with a vehicle to meet with provincial government, including the Premier and prospective candidates (interview, 2011, observations, 2011). Pache and Santos (2010) predict that centralization protects an industry from future institutional demand challenges. It was hoped that collectively companies would be able to innovate faster and drive isomorphism in the organisational field by encouraging laggards to move faster without the need for regulation. The companies involved were keen to avoid state intervention and to maintain control of their emerging solutions and field boundaries themselves (Strang and Meyer, 1993).

6.4.2.7: Communication strategy: a quiet good news story

Participating companies also saw this as an opportunity to develop a collective good news story:

> "We're CAPP members; we spend enough money communicating through CAPP. So what we're trying to do is generate good news stories and successes and hope that CAPP can communicate, plus we all have our communications departments that can communicate so, it doesn't make sense to do that too... so individual companies can do that too... and so we're hoping when we get it posted on the website, bloggers and other people will say, OK, that's interesting, I like that story" (Issue Manager).

A new approach to communication was tried – silence. However this was not the same as the earlier silence that came about because of lack of awareness of issues or as a form of avoidance strategy. Initially the organisation did not have a website. This silence was strategic in that it was designed to show integrity, focus on performance and lead to word-of-mouth information sharing from bloggers, journalists and other influencers. Furthermore, it was hoped that this collaboration would act as a good news story 'within the boardroom'. This was another source of private pressure on companies with boards of directors questioning climate change and environmental impacts.

6.4.3: Summary

The formation of this collaborative organisation was a consequence of several pressures felt by companies in the organisational field and a belief that there needed to be collective rather than individual actions at the company level. Collective responses can more effectively shape demands and redefine rules and logics (Scott, 2008; 175). This form of settlement organisation took place because of an absence of collaborative activity across the organisational field, particularly because there were low levels of trust between environmental groups and companies. Instead, company executives working for the oil sands units had to use their own corporate environmentalism identities (Hoffman, 1997; Wright et al., 2013) to develop their own cooperative initiative. Competitors and those working for the coalition found ways to frame themselves as related entities in order to overcome their company boundaries and bridge with each other.

The establishment of a collaborative organisation had a wide range of benefits, including: sophisticated impression management; the development of piloting facilities and the development of technological breakthroughs; attempts to increase political support through advocacy work with provincial leaders and cultivate 'influencer' stakeholders able to present authentic support and use their expertise or celebrity to improve societal support for oil sands and develop deeper relations and embedding within the aboriginal communities. This represents the combination of technical and symbolic practices that combine to establish a new institutional order where these participating companies set about to establish themselves as superior and thus attempt to improve the reputation of their industry. This contributes to our emerging understanding of a settlement as a new organisational form. The organisation was the outcome of micro-political activity by a small number of actors who used their friendship to discuss issues and to eventually cross their own organisational hierarchies by establishing a new organisation to address collective challenges. This also suggests that when conflicting groups will not negotiate and collaborate, such as radical

environmentalists with oil companies, they leave a space within the field for other collaborative endeavours to fill.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

7.1: Theoretical Contributions

This thesis develops an in-depth case study of an organisational field to understand how adversarial stakeholders challenge corporations (research question one), and the ways in which corporations respond to stakeholder pressures (research question two). In this chapter I summarise the theoretical contributions, discussing them in relation to the two research questions. I then describe the limitations of the study and future research directions.

7.1.1: How do adversarial stakeholders challenge corporations?

The thesis establishes a new understanding (for organisational studies) of the ways in which adversarial stakeholders challenge corporations (research question one) by exerting indirect institutional pressure through a bearing witness logic of protest. This challenges the established notion of activists targeting firms (den Hond and de Bakker, 2007) because it demonstrates a type of protest strategy that centres on creating new understandings of the resource itself through the identity work of those bearing witness, such as community 'custodians' and scientific experts. This can be conducted by relatively few actors but can have far reaching impact on cultural understandings, as demonstrated by oil sands garnering international attention as 'dirty oil'. Companies were not targeted directly but instead the notion of oil sands was challenged. This thesis also explains the environmental conditions which led to this logic of protest being deployed by these oppositional stakeholders.

Den Hond and de Bakker (2007) considered the bearing witness logic of protest to be inappropriate in the context of activists targeting corporations. However, because the social movement in this case is made up of professional environmentalists (activists) and local community members with environmental concerns about an entire geographical area, i.e. oil sands as a resource and opportunity to extract, rather than a specific company practice, this leads to the logic of bearing witness. Instead of focusing on a particular target firm, the bearers of witness focus on their own accounts, and ways of creating and disseminating knowledge, such as through lectures, reports, or performative acts such as stunts that encapsulate their strength of feeling about the issue. This means that those working for the industry experience the social movement actors' efforts mediated by the public, and especially the employees' individual social networks. In addition this thesis makes a contribution to social movement theory by developing a typology of identities used to demonstrate the expertise to bear witness. It also reflects on the environmental mechanisms that led to this logic of protest being deployed.

An interesting dynamic that was revealed in this case was that, rather than targeting a particular company, stakeholders challenged the concept of oil sands by framing it as 'dirty oil' or 'tar sands' in order to successfully voice their concerns about the speed of expansion and its impacts on the environmental and local communities in the Alberta region. This collective targeting of the industry as a whole rather than the individual corporations that were involved established community as an important stakeholder group, as this group, more so than others, was being directly affected by environmental impacts of the oil sands extraction. The findings show that a small number of community members, environmentalists and 'experts' launched an international campaign against "dirty oil" using the bearing witness logic of protest. As well as outlining a typology of witness bearer identities, I also offer some environmental mechanisms that lead to this logic of protest. This bearing witness logic of protest differs markedly from other mechanisms of challenge and, as demonstrated in this case, can be a powerful tactic when deployed against an industry. This study is one of the first to highlight the importance of this protest mechanism and to capture some of its key characteristics.

The public became concerned about the oil sands as a consequence of the negative attention placed on the resource by community members and environmentalists (the social movement actors). Those working for oil sands companies became aware of public scrutiny through their social networks. The industry responded by communicating to the public at the individual and industry level. These communication responses were *factual, educational* and *personal*. Field-level responses were particularly important because pressures felt by companies were collective and not necessarily directed at particular companies. Furthermore, the bearing witness logic of protest used by the social movement actors focuses more on the experiences and accounts of people than it does on demanding a particular agenda or change to specific practices. Employees play an important role. They are essential for an expanding industry, and as those who decide on appropriate responses (Pache and Santos, 2010). But, they are also critical as facilitators of positive communications towards the industry. This is either as conduits to their social networks, or as identities that the industry can use to personalise its own corporate identity. The logic of bearing witness also foregrounds community stakeholders; groups of actors who have previously been neglected by institutional theory (Thornton et al., 2012). Marquis and colleagues (2008; 2010) provide a rare exception to this. The existing literature often considers community members to be weak and peripheral. This case study demonstrates that local communities can be highly important to firms when they have a role in the regulatory

process, when they speak out against the industry and because they may have complex social needs and barriers that the industry becomes involved in addressing.

Communities are considered important because local resistance towards the industry from them risks public attention because of their proximity, lifestyles and normative claims to the land as aboriginal people. Furthermore, any resistance to the oil sands that they demonstrate is highly supported by (often international) environmental groups. This stakeholder group (made up of several heterogeneous communities) also has other complex institutional arrangements because of their role in the regulatory process. Furthermore, their lack of capacity to deal with hundreds of consultation processes, as well as social issues and barriers to work, provides a complex set of pressures for companies to respond to. There was a normative belief that providing benefits to the community was critical, but companies increasingly wanted to avoid providing cash payments, preferring employment or education. Companies responded individually and collectively by becoming more involved within communities. Initially contact was minimal, such as through cheque book diplomacy, but this later shifted to relationship building and the embedding of themselves within communities. OSLI's sustainable community working group was particularly successful at embedding its work to address societal needs. Furthermore, communities are an important stakeholder group because they represent a salient and emotive issue of concern for other stakeholder groups, notably environmentalists and the general public. This is likely to lead to increased institutional pressure or direct stakeholder demands being placed on companies or the field to respond appropriately. Thus, communities are a marginal, heterogeneous but highly emotive stakeholder group and when they voice issues indirectly, through actions as witness bearers, and directly, through participation in the regulatory process, they can be a potent stakeholder group and highly important within the organisational field.

7.1.2: In what ways do corporations respond to stakeholder pressures?

We know surprising little about how corporations respond to their institutional pressures (Greenwood et al., 2011). This is especially the case as stakeholders have different demands, methods and perceived legitimacy. This thesis empirically studies how corporations interact with regional, social and environmental stakeholders. In particular, it looks in depth at an entire organisational field from the perspective of different actors and stakeholders, and explores how companies focus differently on each stakeholder group. To have these dynamics and interactions empirically studied across an entire organisational field is unique and, thus provides deeper insights into corporate responses that previous studies have missed. This thesis also provides a methodological contribution as it uses qualitative data to analyse field and organisational level responses to institutional pluralism.

Answering research question two, the thesis finds that corporations respond to stakeholder pressures in a number of ways. Firstly, I show that corporate responses to stakeholder pressures are deployed at the individual firm and at the collective industry level. Existing texts in this area have been based on a single response (such as Tracey et al., 2000), purely conceptual (Oliver, 1991; Pache and Santos, 2010) or they are literature reviews trying to pull together a whole range of responses, or else they were purely theoretical in nature (Greenwood et al., 2011; Kraatz and Block; Suddaby and Lawrence, 2006).

My research on the other hand shows that multiple and differing corporate responses were used with different actors (public, environmentalists and community members), such as community relations, issue management, environmental management, stakeholder management and then another tier of field level staff members, such as industry funded teachers, trade association staff, consultants and museum staff. My findings reveal a whole range of stakeholder responses and show how these are compartmentalised into individual roles. Previous studies that have considered corporate responses (Oliver, 1991; Pache and Santos, 2010) have not tested this empirically or have focused solely on one type of response in detail, as is the case with much of the community relations literature (Bowen et al., 2010). Corporate responses are more likely to try to influence and shape institutional dynamics and values than was previously considered by those looking at strategic responses (cf. Stern and Barley 1996). This is particularly the case at the field-level. Employees play a vital role not only in deciding how to respond, not to mention keeping the company profitable, but also in terms of providing their own individual reputation on the line to add to the legitimacy of the firm and acting as a micro-communicator with their social networks through social media.

The mechanisms through which corporate responses are enacted involves a wide range of actors working in boundary-spanning roles, such as community relations staff, issue managers, communications managers, stakeholder managers and environmental managers. External consultants also play an important role. How actors, in this case employees, respond is determined by the stakeholder group in question. Those working for the industry respond to the particular stakeholder group by attempting to develop relations and collaborate with them first and foremost. A key finding of the research is that corporate responses are more relational in quality than previously understood. Previous research that has examined corporate responses has focused on the role of the corporations as unitary entities, however, this study shows that corporate responses involve a complex network of relationships that are spread across different stakeholder groups and other actors within the organisational fields.

Companies also try to respond to environmental NGOs and engage with others in their organisational field. Firms were willing to develop cooperative relations with environmentalists even if they had been publically critical of them. Those environmental NGOs who had not been publically part of the social movement action were encouraged to cooperate to find win-win solutions. In contrast, those not willing to meet were dismissed privately by boundary-spanning employees such as issue managers or environmental managers. They justified this by claiming that those not willing to collaborate and enter dialogue were *non-representative, or hypocritical* - because their lifestyles still depended on oil, or they had ulterior pressures themselves because they needed fame and money.

Several pressures shared by individual companies led to the establishment of a collaborative organisation with progressive companies from the industry in the province. These pressures were both external, such as the public's 'soft advocacy', and internal to the trade association because this collective was unable to satisfy all its member companies because some of the largest companies wanted to work collaboratively to try to improve performance around the major set of environmental and community issues raised by the social movement and in their private work with communities.

Establishing a collaborative organisation addressed a number of institutional pressures felt by the companies. These were to community stakeholders and by responding to key environmental challenges, particularly around land and water use. They developed a broad range of responses: speeding up research and development activities and sharing best practice; establishing their own networks and shared language; creating advocacy networks with key influencer stakeholders and fostering embedded relations with a couple of pilot aboriginal communities. The intention of this was also to drive laggard firms towards proactive responses to stakeholders and environmental issues without the need for regulatory intervention. The establishment of this group also suggests that when conflicting stakeholder groups, such as the radical environmentalists, will not collaborate, this leaves competitors to potentially create their own space in order to ensure they maintain stability and advantage with the organisational field. Their responses were not only directed at stakeholder pressures but also at field-level dynamics which had emerged.

7.2: Limitations of the research

The case study data was conducted over a relatively short period of time from 2010 to 2012. Whilst those in the field were able to discuss how responses and relations had changed over time, and in particular were able to discuss the social movement actors' emergence and the subsequent corporate responses to it, this is a relatively narrow slice of time for an institutional study. This is the unfortunate downside of attempting to answer the call to conduct 'coalface institutionalism' and focus on day to day work in real time (Barley, 2008; Suddaby, 2010). This thesis could be the first phase in developing a longitudinal case study over a much longer time frame, as demonstrated by Zeitsma and Lawrence (2010) in their study of the practice and boundary work carried out in the paper industry. In focusing on the organisational and field level and the breadth of the repertoire, this could give the illusion that all companies are deploying all of these responses. Such a strategy was essential to ensure that a range of responses were uncovered empirically in order to build theory. However future research would benefit from quantifying such a range of responses and determining whether particular companies, based on values or country of origin, for example, utilise different responses.

A further limitation of the study was that in order to gain access to interviewees, especially from industry and communities, I promised anonymity for participants. This meant that I limited the amount of information about personal identities within the thesis and yet this helped generate rich insights into the field level dynamics and the responses that were used. One example is the way in which an environmental manager used his personal lifestyle and identity to promote the oil sands issues by demonstrating that he was deeply concerned about the environment. A further example of the utility of this approach would have been explaining the career trajectories of certain actors, for example the actor whose career moved from government into industry, or another man whose career shifted from the social movement into the First Nations business unit (whose profits come from the oil sands). The role of hybrid identities, such as those working to support the oil sands industry but also concerned about living a carbon-neutral personal life, as well as other hybrid identities and career paths, such as aboriginal campaigner and business person, would make for interesting further study. In the section below I further discuss future research directions stemming from this thesis.

7.3: Future research directions

There are a number of interesting avenues that future research could follow from this thesis. During the field work I was able to get brief glimpses into private responses and relations that were not focused on public-facing stakeholder groups such as social movement actors, community members or the public. It was clear that there were interrelations between those in political power and business for example. Responses such as lobbying, relations building with government members and boards of directors do not make up this thesis (Barley, 2010). The role of extra-institutional actors, for example ex-CEOs, would be particularly interesting. Another area of future research could be the role of social networks for example in terms of distributing and making internal a social movement campaign.

As discussed in the literature review, neo-institutionalists have largely overlooked the role of community as both an institutional arrangement and stakeholder group able to exert complex institutional pressure at corporations and organisational fields. As such, further comparative contexts would clarify constructs and nuances that may have been derived from this single case study. Examples might be the level of politicisation of the community in question, whether the affluence of the community makes a difference to their levels of opposition, attempts to challenge a company, industry or practice, as well as how the governance structures of countries might influence pressures and responses. Social movement actors are clearly strategic in how they select their issues and frames but we know little about how they make such decisions and how these in turn influence corporate responses.

In this study, community members and environmentalists from international non-government organisations had already established relationships and repertoires under the logic of bearing witness when I 'entered the field'. We know little about how such arrangements come to develop. It would be revealing to study the early generative moments of local resistance and grassroots activism towards a particular development or target company and how or whether international activist attention is sought and gained.

7.4: Conclusion

This thesis set out to develop an in-depth understanding of stakeholder and corporate response relationships. A review of the literature demonstrates that our understanding of how organisations respond to complex and contradictory stakeholder pressure is limited.

Existing organisational theory also lacks key insights into how stakeholders such as environmentalists and community members collaborate together to challenge corporate responses through the bearing witness logic of protest. Furthermore, we know about how environments influence organisations but we know far less about the ways in which corporations respond to stakeholder pressure in order to shape their future demands and alter their lived experience. This thesis has generated important contributions to the study of interrelationships between stakeholders, corporations and organisational fields.

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List of Abbreviations

AGM	Annual General Meeting
BBC	British Broadcasting Association
BC	British Columbia
CAPP	Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers
CAQDAS	Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
C-TIE	Centre for Technology Innovation and Entrepreneurship
eNGO	Environmental Non-Government Organisation
LARP	Lower Athabasca Regional Plan
MBA	Master in Business Administration
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
OSDC	Oil Sands Discovery Centre
OSDG	Oil Sands Development Group
OSLI	Oil Sands Leadership Initiative
OSQAR	Oil Sands Question and Response
RAN	Rainforest Action Network
USA	United States of America
UK	United Kingdom